

THE  
LOCKET;  
OR,  
THE HISTORY  
OF  
MR. SINGLETON.  
A NOVEL.  
IN TWO VOLUMES.

By the AUTHOR of EMILY;  
OR, THE HISTORY  
OF a NATURAL DAUGHTER.

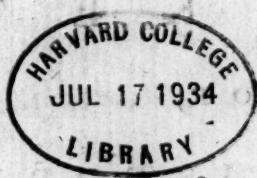
VOL. I.

L O N D O N:

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THE  
LOCKET,  
&c.

etc. etc. to etc. oldalp. II. 111.

**I** N a very wet and dark even-  
ing—though it was in the  
summer season—two gentle-  
men well mounted, and at-  
tended by a servant, rode up to a pub-  
lic house on the Chester road, which the  
owner had dignified with the name of  
inn: and indeed it might have, perhaps,  
in former days, merited that appella-  
tion: but, as the houses for the recep-

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tion of travellers make an appearance in *this age* very different from that in the *last*, no body except its master would have so distinguished it.

When his new guests entered the yard, Mr. Thomas Taps bolted out of his bar-room, and very assiduously offered to assist them in dismounting, but as they were both young and active, they sprung from their horses in a moment, and after having ordered them to be taken all possible care of, were conducted into the handsomest apartment by the landlord.

When our two travellers had bespoke the best supper which the house afforded, the elder of them, whose name was *Revel*, seeing something in *mine host* which promised, he thought, some amusement, asked his companion, Mr. Bonfoy, if

they should send for him to partake of the punch they had ordered.

“ As you please, replied Bonfoy; but “ I think there is, commonly, a same- “ ness of humour in your inn-keepers, “ which is rather tiresome than enter- “ taining: the very brightest of them “ are, in my opinion, sufficiently stu- “ pid.”

“ That is to say, my dear Charles, “ their humour is not to *your* taste: for “ once, however, we may put up with “ my landlord’s coarsest jokes, pro- “ vided he has any useful intelligence “ to communicate. Besides, it is quite “ necessary for you to know if you have “ not given up the prosecution of your “ plan, what houses there are in this “ county, who lives in them, and who “ have any to dispose of. Now we will “ try to get this information at least:

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“ and that we may find out what we  
“ do want, we shall not act like bad  
“ politicians, by enquiring after what  
“ we do *not* want.—Here landlord,  
“ continued he, raising his voice, if you  
“ are not busy, sit down, and give us a  
“ little history of the families round  
“ about you, as we are strangers to this  
“ part of the country.”

“ That I can readily do, Sir, an-  
“ swered he, bringing a chair, as I have  
“ lived in this village, man and boy,  
“ these five and forty years.”

“ The properest man in the world  
“ for our purpose, replied Revel, fil-  
“ ling his glass.”

Just as Taps had got the glass to  
his lips, a man appeared at the door of  
the room, and bawled out to him not  
to

to forget to bring the young woman early in the morning before his worship, as the overseers of the poor would make her swear the child to a father who was able to keep it; adding, that they could not, and would not take the charge of any more bastards upon them.

Taps replied, hastily, that he would remember the businels, and then, drawing his chair once more to the table, said — “ You must know, gemmen, that I “ am constable of this here parish, and “ am obliged to carry a girl before his “ worship, master justice Singleton, to- “ morrow, to swear a child.”

“ You make it a practice then, said “ Revel, interrupting him, to fix upon “ any man in good circumstances, tho’ “ innocent of the fact, rather than the

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“ real father of the child, should he  
“ happen to be poor, do you?”

“ Why really, Sir, answered Taps,  
“ that’s all chance work: to be sure it  
“ would be best for the girl, as well as  
“ for us, to find out a father in good  
“ circumstances, but that must be left  
“ to *her*, and for my part, to tell you a  
“ bit of my mind—I don’t believe, be-  
“ tween you and I—that the child will  
“ be fwore at all.”

“ What? Is the wench shy? said Re-  
“ vel: is she ashamed to come to con-  
“ fession? or is she so honest, that know-  
“ ing she had *her* share of the mischief,  
“ which could not have been done with-  
“ out her permission, she is sorry to  
“ bring him to punishment who has  
“ done his business so well.”

“ Neither

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“ Neither one nor t’other is the thing,  
“ said Taps; the girl is neither ashamed  
“ nor afraid of speaking before any  
“ body; but our justice is such a deadly  
“ odd sort of a man, that he cannot abide  
“ to do any busines, d’ye see, where a  
“ woman is *consarned*.”

“ I suppose then he is married, said  
“ Revel.”

“ No; answered my landlord, that’s  
“ not it neither, tho’ to be sure matri-  
“ mony gives some men a great dislike  
“ to women, as I can make bold to say  
“ upon experience; but tho’ his wor-  
“ ship Singleton was never married in  
“ all his born days, yet he has a won-  
“ derful *antipaty* to all woman kind;  
“ in so much, that he can scarcely bear  
“ them in his sight; and except ma-  
“ dam Grace, his worship’s sister, I don’t

B 4                    “ believe

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“ believe he has looked a woman in the  
“ face these twenty years.”

“ An odd character this ; said Bonfoy.”

“ Pshaw ! some old sinner, I'll Jay  
“ my life, said Revel, who keeps a girl  
“ snug in a corner, and affects an aver-  
“ sion to the whole sex, on purpose to  
“ hide his fornication, and make people  
“ believe he is better than his neigh-  
“ bours. — I warrant now, he has got a  
“ handsome house maid also, to warm  
“ his bed in winter, and cool it in  
“ summer.”

“ No such I assure you, answered  
“ Taps.—You know nothing of the  
“ matter, sir; why he is famous for  
“ collecting all the ugly wenches to-  
“ gether in the county; it is not what  
“ they can do which gets them a place  
“ at

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“ at the *ball*, nor how they behaved in  
“ the last family: if they are deformed,  
“ and ill-looking, that is recommenda-  
“ tion enough—Why now, there is the  
“ cook is hump-backed; the house-maid  
“ has but one eye, and the dairy-maid  
“ has one leg shorter than the other:  
“ and as for madam Grace’s own maid,  
“ she is as red-haired as a fox, as freck-  
“ led as a toad, and squints like a de-  
“ vil.”

Here Revel and Bonfoy were, both,  
unable to refrain from laughing aloud:  
the former said—“ I suppose madam  
“ Grace is remarkably homely also, and  
“ therefore, cannot bear the appearance  
“ of any woman handsomer than her-  
“ self.”

“ No, indeed.—Madam’s a very  
“ comely woman for her time of day;

B 5. “ and

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“ and the squire is a very proper man,  
“ only he has such a down look when  
“ any woman comes in his sight. Why  
“ now there’s *my* wife, gemmen, and  
“ she is as plain a piece as a man need  
“ wish to be laid by the side of, though  
“ the woman’s a good kind of a woman  
“ in her way: I don’t say this out of  
“ any disparagement; but when *she* has  
“ sometimes been sent for by madam,  
“ who loves to know what is going for-  
“ ward, and has happened to meet the  
“ squire, he either goes back or turns  
“ his head aside that he may not see her  
“ face.”

“ If your wife is so plain as you say  
“ she is, said Revel, I do not wonder  
“ at Mr. Singleton’s turning his head  
“ aside when he sees her, but I dare  
“ swear if a fine girl was to come in his  
“ way, he would behave quite in an-  
“ other manner.”

“ Not

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“Not he indeed, Sir—He has had  
“this *version* to women time out of  
“mind, and though squire Tofts’s  
“daughter, who is reckoned the biggest  
“beauty in the county, and has even  
“had folks from London die for love,  
“visits madam Grace, yet his worship  
“can never be persuaded to come into  
“the room when she is there.”

Revel, who had a very high relish  
for a character, winked to Bonfoy, at  
Tap’s language, of which he desired  
some explanation, by asking him whether  
miss Tofts was the *largest* woman in the  
county, or one of the *handsomest*.

“The larger she is, said Bonfoy, she  
“must certainly be the bigger beauty  
“— But the justice, perhaps, having  
“formerly made his addresses to her,  
“and

“ and found her cruel, may not care to  
“ trust himself with her again.”

“ Lord, Sir! cried Taps; he has seen  
“ so little of her, that I'll venture my  
“ best horse *Whisky*, against the squire's  
“ Wall-eyed Bob-tail, that he does not  
“ know whether her face is black or  
“ white: though her skin is as clear as  
“ *christial*, and her eyes twinkle like  
“ stars in a frosty evening.”

“ Ay? replied Revel—why *you* speak  
“ as if you was no woman-hater, what-  
“ ever this strange fellow may be—but  
“ cannot you contrive to let us be pre-  
“ sent at the examination to-morrow?  
“ It will be altogether a high scene, I  
“ fancy, and quite a new one to us.  
“ Besides, I have an unsurmountable  
“ curiosity to see your justice.”

“ Oh,

“ Oh, for that matter, answered Taps,  
“ I can carry you to the *ball* at any  
“ time, for he is a very hospitable, civil  
“ gentleman as can be to man, but he  
“ will not admit a woman into his house  
“ upon any account, except those who  
“ come to madam, and were it not for  
“ her, he would be served only by men,  
“ I verily believe.”

“ I suppose he sees his sister’s com-  
“ pany, said Bonfoy, who began to  
“ grow a little curious about this sin-  
“ gular character, as well as his friend.”

“ None—if he can help it, cried Bo-  
“ niface; and then he neither looks at  
“ them, nor speaks to them.”

“ Well, I *must* see him, however, said  
“ Revel, and upon the bench in his  
“ *public character.*”

“ As

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“ As to that, I cannot tell how I shall  
“ manage it, said Tofts, for he will  
“ make a thousand excuses before he  
“ will see us at all, that is, with our  
“ baggage muster; without *her*, I make  
“ no doubt but we shall be welcome,  
“ for he is the best sort of man in the  
“ world when there is no woman in the  
“ way. It was but t’other day, that  
“ Doll Trapes had a warrant against  
“ Goody Clapper, who had called her  
“ whore, and I was forced to carry her  
“ before him; *bowsumever*, when we got  
“ to the hall, he sent word out by his  
“ clerk that he was sick, and could not  
“ speak to any body: and so Mr. Goose-  
“ quil, who is a very civil kind of a  
“ young man, and his steward into the  
“ bargain, would have persuaded them  
“ to shake hands, and make up matters  
“ between them, and not disturb any  
“ people about their nonsense, especi-  
“ ally as his worship was not well; but  
you

“ you know, Sir, there is no making  
“ women lead or drive sometimes, tho'  
“ at other times, they are as easily  
“ moulded as a piece of dough. And so  
“ as we could not satisfy them, I was  
“ obliged to take them before justice  
“ Lasher, who is to the full as severe  
“ as his worship Singleton is mild.—  
“ E'cod, he committed them both in a  
“ whiff, one for being a whore, and  
“ t'other for calling her so.”

Just at that moment one of the overseers of the poor stepped into the house, and calling for Taps, told him, that cross-eyed Bett had been making a d——ble noise at farmer Crop's, to get him to marry her, and threatening to swear her child to him to morrow, let what would come of it; adding, he was so ashamed of her making such a riot before his mother and sisters, that he turned her out of the gate by the head  
and

and shoulders.—“ Now this, continued  
“ he, put her into such a mortal passion,  
“ that she would swear to night, if so be  
“ as how we could come at the sight of  
“ his worship.”

Taps told him, that it would be soon enough in the morning; then sitting down with his guests, he acquainted them with the secret history of the whole parish; part of which was tolerably diverting: and the other so exceedingly dull, that Bonfoy began to yawn and stretch.

Revel, looking upon his friend's yawns and stretchings, as signals for retiring, rose; and told the landlord that he hoped his beds were good.

“ Aye, that they are, replied he, and  
“ the sheets are sweet and clean, though  
“ home spun.”

With

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With these words he wished them a good night, and returned to his tankard in the kitchen.

In the morning the two friend were up betimes, and expressed the greatest eagerness to have a sight of Singleton, telling Taps that they were ready to attend the justice-business, and that they would, rather than lose the diversion, willingly go without their breakfasts.

“ Why, gemmen, cried Taps, I have been thinking that it will be better to introduce you first to his worship, and then, while you are there, to bring Bett upon him at once.”

“ Well planned, friend Taps, replied Revel; let’s away then.”—

Mine host, however, who saw they were by no means shy of spending their “ money

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money, and who knew that when they once got to the hall, their return from it would be very uncertain, contrived one delay after another till the breakfast had been sent in and demolished. He then told them that he was ready to wait on them.

It was a pretty walk to the *hall*; a considerable part of it lay through the owners grounds, which were kept in the greatest order imaginable, and laid out with an elegant simplicity. The whole appearance around them, in short, gave the young travellers a high opinion of Mr. Singleton's understanding, contrivance, and taste.

Upon their arrival at the *hall*, a plain, neat, convenient edifice, and furnished with every thing to make it a cheerful, comfortable habitation, Taps told the servant who came to the door to know their

their business, that he had brought a couple of gentlemen, who had slept at his house the night before, to take a view of the house and grounds.

The servant, in consequence of this information, desired the gentlemen to walk in, adding, that he wotild acquaint his master immediately with their coming.

Mr. Singleton very soon *appeared*, in order to receive them; and he behaved to them with the utmost politeness; with all the external marks of sincerity.

Mr. Singleton was a tall well-made man: he seemed to be somewhat turned of forty; but he was, in fact, pretty near fifty: he had lived a very temperate life, and therefore looked much younger than he was. He had a grave, manly countenance; a pleasing voice and

and address. His cloaths were plain, but they were not formal nor old fashioned. His head had a modern appearance as he wore his own hair, which grew thick, and was not of a disagreeable colour, but he did not modernize it in the dressing, by club, queue, or bag. He suffered it to wave over his forehead very much in a state of nature, and it gave no ungraceful air to his countenance, while it threw a personal *naiveté* over his whole figure. With that *naiveté*, the gentleman and the man of sense were happily blended, so that he was, at first sight, a prepossessing object to people who had the least discernment: and as our travellers were particularly discerning, when a character came in their way, they received Mr. Singleton's civilities in a manner which obliged him to repeat them, and to return them he was equally led by the impulse of his inclination, and the goodness

ness of his heart.—They, also, made proper apologies for the liberty they had taken.—Revel, who was the principal speaker, said, that as they were upon a tour through the west, in order to see every thing worthy of observation, they could not pass Singleton-hall, without desiring leave to pay their respects to him—In short, they soon talked themselves into a good opinion of each other. Singleton, though by no means forward in making new acquaintance, saw something in Revel and Bonfoy which pleased him; he, therefore, accompanied them in a walk about his grounds, and received an unusual satisfaction from the encomiums he heard upon his laying them out. After some conversation relating to the part of the country they were in, Revel gave a hint, that his companion wished to secure a little retreat in a pleasant rural situation; Mr. Singleton then seemed to feel additional pleasure:

pleasure: he not only invited his young companions to dine with him, but insisted upon it; adding, that he was afraid they were poorly accommodated at Taps's, though he believed he was an honest fellow.

Just when the young travellers had accepted of Mr. Singleton's invitation, with that sort of reluctance which generally produces the renewal of a request, a servant came to let him know that the constable had brought a woman to swear a bastard child before him.

On this sudden and unexpected intelligence, he changed colour immediately: he looked pale and red, by turns; his eyes were stretched into an unmeaning stare; his knees trembled; and he discovered the strongest marks of horror in his whole person. He opened his mouth two or three times, but closed it

it again, without speaking a syllable; appearing, indeed, to be quite bereft of the powers of utterance.

Bonfoy, who saw, who felt for his distress, from the natural benevolence of his disposition, which he could in no way account for, thought he had been seized with an epilepsy, and offered him his arm to support him to the house, to which he staggered without articulating a single word. So much was he affected by the information he had received, and by imagining the scene to which he was summoned, that his whole frame shook; and he could scarce set one foot before the other.

When he arrived at the hall, at last, with much difficulty, he quitted the friendly arm which had assisted him, and threw himself into the *magisterial chair*, without once looking at the crowd assembled

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sembled before him. Leaning his head upon his hand, he turned his back upon every one present.

While the officer in waiting opened his harangue with all the embellishments of style in his power, and entered minutely into the business which engaged his attention, Mr. Singleton was observed to start several times, and to draw up his legs, as if tortured with the cramp. — He writhed his body, fetched deep sighs, and once, when he removed his hand from his eyes, only for a moment, they appeared to be as red as if he had been weeping.

So strange a carriage in a man of *his* understanding and years, and in *his* station, appeared both astonishing, absurd, and entirely unaccountable. Totally incapable of filling the character to be represented

represented by him, he was, really, at the same time, an object of compassion.

While he sat in this agonizing situation, a person came hurrying into the room, and said something to the woman with her big belly, a coarse strapping wench, in a whisper.—The wench, who seemed not to be under the least concern for what *had* happened, or for what *might* happen, declared, upon the departure of the man who had taken her aside, that she had got a father to provide for her child; she also declared, however, that she would not mention his name.

In consequence of this declaration, Mr. Singleton shook all over, as if he was in an ague fit.—When he came a little to himself, he bade them, in faltering, but hurrying accents, take the woman away. Finding that he was not obeyed, he repeated his commands.

The constable then interposing, said, with great humility, that he imagined his worship would think it proper for the parish to have some security, that neither the mother nor her child should be burdensome to it.

Here the justice gave a deep groan, and appeared ready to faint.—The woman then declaring that she had received money enough both for her own, and her child's support, desired his worship to let her go home; he had just strength sufficient left to give his assent, with a sign to Taps. When he had thus finished the great business of the morning, he left the room, and retired to his own apartment; from thence he sent a very civil message to Revel and Bonfoy, begging them to excuse him for half an hour, and not let the indisposition that had seized him—which would—he hoped—soon be over—deprive him of the

the pleasure of their company at dinner.

So obliging a request could not but be complied with. Had Mr. Singleton, indeed, known the taste of his guests and their relish for oddities, he would not have the slightest doubts of their readiness to stay with him, till they had seen a little more of him.

Revel, indeed, though a good-natured man, had a high relish for the *ridiculous* in any *character* that came in his way, and who would have endured many inconveniencies for the enjoyment of a humorous character, had, at this time, not a few suspicions concerning the modesty of the magistrate himself, which insensibly prompted him to believe that he had a share in the child forth-coming: his violent emotions on the sight of the mother, certainly war-

C 2 ranted

ranted such conjectures. Revel, therefore, was very unwilling to lose an opportunity of seeing an end to an affair, that from its singularity in some respects, promised him still more amusement than he had already received from it.

As soon as he was alone with Bonfoy, he communicated his suspicions to him, relating to Singleton's having a hand in the unfortunate accident which had happened to cross-eyed Bett: he found Bonfoy, however, of another opinion, who could not believe that Singleton was that sort of man, having discovered different principles during the short time they had been together, nor could he imagine that he would have taken up with so very coarse a person, had he been ever so amorously disposed: a person, whose behaviour, manners, and character, were so opposite to his own.—“ It

“ is

“ is almost impossible to think, added  
“ he, that there should ever have been  
“ even the slightest connection between  
“ them.”

To this speech, Revel, who had pretty  
well studied human nature, replied,  
“ that no rules were to be laid down  
“ for such things, and that they were,  
“ very frequently, rather accidental,  
“ than premeditated.”—“ No man, in-  
“ deed, of any taste, continued he,  
“ would chuse any kind of *contact* with  
“ such a low-bred wench as *Bett* ap-  
“ peared to be; yet a man particularly  
“ modest, and uncommonly shy, might  
“ think, perhaps, that he stood a bet-  
“ ter chance for not being found out  
“ with a girl of this vulgar stamp, than  
“ with another of a more elegant form,  
“ and delicate carriage.”

“ Well! there may be something in  
“ what you say, answered Bonfoy—but  
“ then, he never, surely, could have  
“ left her, without making a provision  
“ for her, at least; to prevent her being  
“ brought before him, as an object,  
“ likely to be burthensome to the pa-  
“ rish. Certainly, a man degrades him-  
“ self full enough in drawing such a  
“ scandal upon himself; but when by  
“ his negligence, his dirty amour be-  
“ comes public, there is no excuse to be  
“ urged for his conduct. The woman  
“ who is thrown into so dishonourable  
“ a situation by a man, ought, in my  
“ opinion, to engage his particular at-  
“ tention; that she may not be driven  
“ by poverty or shame, to destroy an  
“ innocent child—to add murder to  
“ fornication.”

While

While he was speaking the few last words, Singleton came into the room, and having heard them on his entrance, was violently affected by them. He changed colour again, and trembled to such a degree, that had not Bonfoy, a second time, ran to his assistance, he would certainly have fallen to the ground.

Revel was now convinced that Mr. Singleton was the father of the little *Invisible* which had been brought before him; so thoroughly was he convinced, that he would have supported his suspicions at the hazard of his whole fortune.

Mr. Singleton, as soon as he had recovered from the new agitation into which Bonfoy's last words had thrown him, did the honours of his house with a benevolence and politeness, which could not fail to make him appear to

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his guests in a most amiable light. He now conducted them into the best apartments of his house, in which there were not a few good pictures.—“ I cannot, “ added he, smiling, shew all my pictures till after dinner, as some of my best are in my sister’s dressing-room, “ where she is, I believe, at this time, “ making herself ready to wait on you.”

With regard to his sister’s preparations for making her appearance before the new visitors, Mrs. Singleton was not mistaken. On Mrs. Hannah’s having informed her, two gentlemen from London were to dine at the *Hall*, she retited to her toilette earlier than usual, in order to set herself off to the best advantage, ~~with the most becoming~~ ~~and above all a very~~ ~~and doubtless~~   
 Mrs. Singleton, commonly called Mrs. Grace Singleton, from her being the youngest of Mr. Singleton’s sisters,   
 though

though some years older than himself, had been, in her day, a celebrated toast. Many people would have imagined, from the remains of her beauty, that she had received, in her time, offers not to be slighted; she was, however, in the fifty-sixth year of her age, Mrs. Grace Singleton having been, in consequence of her beauty, exceedingly flattered, she fancied that no man who made his addresses to her deserved the honour of her hand. She therefore continued *rejecting* and *rejecting*, without ever considering that time was gradually impairing her charms, and that she would, in a few years, have no charms to excite, “Envy in woman, or desire in man.” By waiting, indeed, for the *unexceptionable* man, she became herself, *exceptionable*, when the bloom of youth, which had given a glow to her complexion, began to fade, and when her eyes lost their brilliancy. By time and fretting, the whole turn of

her face was, at length, altered ; there was no longer the juvenile plumpness and roundness in it, which attracted numerous admirers ; it became, every year less and less alluring, and the cutting vexations which she endured, whenever she saw a younger and handsomer woman than herself, served to render it doubly forbidding. By seeing women perpetually growing up round her, with persons sufficiently handsome to make them followed ; (not so handsome indeed as *she* had been in her prime, but more attractive than *she* had ever been, by the easy affability of their behaviour, and the goodness of their dispositions) her temper was soured ; she was every day more and more disgusting, and at last dwindled by degrees, into a mere old maid—that is—in the eyes of others—in her own she was still—in spite of the desertion of the men—a very fine woman, and believed that every person

person who did but accidentally cast a look at her, was thinking of her. She still believed too, that she should make her fortune before she died; and that nothing might be wanting on *her* part, she strove to exhibit herself in the *best* manner she could—according to her own ideas of *that* manner—by calling in the assistance of dress to conceal any personal deficiencies. Having heard that two handsome young Londoners were to dine at the *ball*, she sent for her maid Hannah, thinking that she would be an excellent foil to her. Hannah was chosen by her brother, Mr. Singleton, entirely on account of the blemishes of her person, which might have retarded her advancement in many families. She was in truth so very homely, that no man who beheld her once, had any inducement to look at her a second time.

When  
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When Mrs. Hannah made her appearance before her mistress, she was immediately consulted by her about the choice of a becoming cap. Mrs. Singleton began immediately to ask her which cap suited her complexion best, and when she had fixed upon that, which she herself thought most suitable to it, proceeded to enquire about the young strangers—"are they handsome, Hannah," continued she, examining her whole figure in the glass with the greatest self-satisfaction.

I am no judge of beauty, madam, replied Hannah, but they seem to be very proper men.

At this reply, Mrs. Grace, who grew uncommonly good humoured as soon as she heard of the new guests, smiled, and said, "I shall be glad to see whether *your* idea of a *proper man*, and *mine* is the

the same :" she then ordered every thing to be conducted in the best manner possible, that people from London might see they knew how to entertain, as well as if they had lived there all their days.

When Mrs. Grace Singleton had pinched her ruffles, and spread her apron, she hurried down stairs into the dining-room, where she found her brother and his visitors waiting for dinner. From thence they were all summoned to the parlour, soon after she had paid her compliments to Revel and Bonfoy, with the appearance of the latter she was particularly pleased, and was treated by them both, especially by Revel, with the profoundest regard, as she was the sister of Mr. Singleton, a character which he, by every art in his power, excited her to keep up to the very height : He plied her with complimentary speeches

speeches upon her person and accomplishment, which would have been thought nauseously fulsome by a girl of fifteen, but *she* swallowed them with avidity, not having heard such speeches since five-and-twenty; and she began to imagine that she was grown young again, and that she had certainly made a conquest of Revel; and as the perverseness by which she was distinguished in her youthful days, increased with her advancing years, she took it into her head to fix upon Bonfoy, as the man whom she should chuse to encourage; at the same time she wished to declare how exceedingly she pitied Revel, for the little hopes he had of meeting with a return of his passion. She was, however, extremely civil to them both, but she distinguished Bonfoy by loading his plate with every delicacy upon the table, and drinking to him continually in the old fashioned way; a ceremony which kept him

him so constantly employed, as he thought himself in duty bound to return it, that he had hardly any leisure to enjoy the good things she heaped upon him. He was also so much taken with the *naiveté* of Singleton, that he could scarce attend to his sister, whom Revel determined to attack himself, as well for amusement, as to draw her off from his friend, perceiving that she began to be very troublesome to him. With this considerate design, he therefore fell in with her humour, and threw out some broad hints that he had seen few women handsomer than she was. He could not have taken a surer way to please her. He also went so far as to wonder at the stupidity of the men who could let so fine a woman remain single.

Upon this last extravagant compliment, Mrs. Singleton, drawing up her head to an unusual height, said, with the

the most languishing simper, that the men had by no means been to blame—  
“ It was all my own fault, continued  
“ she; I was teized by the whole sex to  
“ such a degree, that I conceived an  
“ aversion to all men—till now—but  
“ now I think I see some—casting a  
“ particular look at Bonfoy—who would  
“ be more agreeable to me, than any of  
“ my former admirers were.”

Revel, who enjoyed this opening of her partiality to Bonfoy, winked at him, and trod on his feet, several times, under the table; and made a thousand signs for him to push his fortune with the lady, but all to no purpose. Bonfoy still persisted in endeavouring to entertain Mr. Singleton, who appeared to be very much pleased with *him* and his conversation; so that, indeed, they both paid little attention to Mrs. Grace and Revel. As for Mrs. Grace, she was quite

quite happy in meeting with a new person to make acquainted with the history of her admirers; an history, which she had repeated so often, that even poor Hannah was absolutely weary of listening to it; and had more than once fallen asleep during the most interesting parts of her narrative. Just when she was in the middle of a description of her first lover, and with a sigh, lamenting the deplorable situation to which her cruel refusal had reduced him, she stopped, looked full at Revel, and then said—“Really, Sir, he was a “very pretty gentleman, in every sense “of the word.”—“But you know, add-“ed she, immediately, that no woman “of delicacy would like to accept of “the very first offer; ‘tis like buying “the first piece of silk that is shewn “for a gown; ‘tis, in short, having no “choice at all;”—“and when people “have tolerable persons too—hem!”—

“The

“ The old and ugly can but take up  
“ with what comes first, lest they should  
“ never receive a second proposal. Where  
“ there is birth and beauty together,  
“ people have a right to expect some-  
“ thing equal to them in return. Be-  
“ sides, when we determine in such a  
“ hurry, we shall, most probably, ac-  
“ cording to the old proverb, (as true  
“ as it is old) have sufficient leisure to  
“ repent; and for my own part, I was  
“ always so much afraid of changing  
“ my mind, and of liking some body  
“ better than my husband, after I was  
“ married, that I really could not bring  
“ myself to accept of the first offer  
“ upon any terms.”

To this long speech, Revel, with a profound submission, replied—“ True,  
“ madam; your opinion is perfectly  
“ just.” She then entered upon her se-  
“ cond amour, which was, she declared,  
“ in

in every respect, so far inferior to her first, that the difference was too immense to permit her to think of it. "I then, " added she, waited impatiently for a "third"—and began to relate it in the most circumstantial manner.

Revel, though naturally of a very lively temper, and a great talker, was an attentive and patient *bearer*, while Mrs. Grace gave him a minute detail of her conquests. Many a man, full as good as Mr. Revel was, I have found, his account in *patient hearing*, and he might, probably, have benefited by his *close attention*, had Mrs. Grace been farther advanced in life, or in a declining state of health. Her bloom, indeed, was gone, but she was not, by any means, (apparently) in danger of immediate death. Revel, therefore, stood no chance for a legacy. However, as he could not get rid of her, he listened on. She now

now began the history of her third lover. "I rejected him," said she, because "I overheard him one day, I declare, "when he thought I was at a greater "distance than I was, that I should be "a very fine woman, if my eye-brows "were thicker and broader. For this "speech of his, I thought I had a very "substantial reason to discard him, as "a man who could make such a speech "before marriage, would certainly have "made still more severe ones afterwards, had I been the perfectest creature in the universe." "And now, "Sir," concluded she, leaning forward, and looking earnestly in Revel's face, "Was I not in the right?" "Undoubtedly, madam," said Revel. "And would not you have done as I did?" "Without

“Without dispute.”—

Just when Revel had spoken these two words, the one-eyed house-maid ran into the parlour in a prodigious hurry, and cried, “oh, dear me! there “is the saddest accident happened: a “coach full of ladies is overset at the “gate, and they scream so, that all the “men are run to help them, and they “bid me to tell your worship.—

“Where? Where? said Revel, eagerly — Where? Where? said Bonfoy, “not with less eagerness—both rising “briskly from their chairs.” --- The former of them, asked Singleton to accompany them — “Come, Sir, won’t “you go and assist the ladies in distress?

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Turning, suddenly, towards one of the back-rooms, he answered, rather ful-  
lenly, "No."

The young friends were in a moment with the coach, which lay flat on one side, and found the servants beginning to drag the company out. They had got a very pretty woman half-way, just as Revel came up.

"I hope, madam, said he, advancing to her, you are not hurt."

Very cordially stretching out her hand, she replied, "Oh Lord, I don't know, indeed; I may be half killed for aught I know; I am so terrified, I have quite lost my feeling."

"Be not frightened, answered Revel, but put yourself under my care,

"care, your feeling will soon be restored."

"Bless me how you talk, Mrs. Owen," said a lively girl, popping up her head at the window immediately afterwards; "I am sure I can feel that my arm has been almost crushed to pieces."

A violent noise was then heard proceeding from the bottom of the coach, as the opposite window proved to be whilst it lay upon the ground.—In a very hoarse key these words were articulated—“What are you about good christian women; shew a little mercy, and do not tread my bowels out.”—“Oh, lord! cried another, what can Mr. Hales mean? He must share the same fate as the rest in such a misfortune as this; every body must have their share.”—“Yes, replied the complaining gentleman, but I have a great

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“ great deal more than my share, I thank  
“ you; you are all defended in your bo-  
“ dies, by those shields of canvass and  
“ whalebone, called stays; and I have  
“ also, had my poor guts almost trod to  
“ a jelly by your confounded peg heels.  
“ A woman’s said to be a helpless ani-  
“ mal, but I am sure I can prove, to  
“ my cost, that they go armed at all  
“ points; and, though they themselves  
“ may not intend any harm, every part  
“ of their dress has something very ob-  
“ noxious in it; to say nothing of their  
“ eyes and their tongues, which have  
“ ruined millions of innocent men, time  
“ out of mind.”

The chearfulness of this jolly fellow,  
who, upon stepping out of the place of  
confinement, discovered a fat, thick,  
short body, and an uncommon archness  
in his countenance, encouraged Revel  
to

to expect a great deal of entertainment from this accident.

Revel, hearing all the terrified ladies positively declare, that they would not, on any account, get into the coach again—that they would rather lie in the road all night—desired them not to make themselves uneasy.—“ You will certainly be welcome at the *ball*, added “ he, ’till you can get your carriage re-“ paired.” He then offered his arm to Mrs. Monson, to assist her in walking to it, and the young ladies followed their leader to Mr. Singleton’s.—Mr. Hales closed the rear.

Mr. Singleton, though he had hastily retreated at the sight of so many women, found his aversion to the fair-sex conquered by his humanity, when he recollect ed that they might be in distress. Moved by compassion, therefore, he

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came out of his library, to which he had retired, in order to enquire what mischief had been done, and to send the ladies any thing that might be serviceable to them.

The moment he entered the parlour door, he saw Revel, Bonfoy, the ladies, and Mr. Hales, under the convoy of Mrs. Grace, advancing towards him.

At the appearance of so many women, and none of them apparently distressed: (they were, indeed, particularly cheerful in consequence of the animating speeches which Revel had addressed to them) he was on the point of going back again, but Revel prevented him—  
“ Stay my good friend, cried he, and  
“ assist me in administering some conso-  
“ lation to these amiable creatures, who  
“ have been almost deprived of their  
“ senses, by the accident they have met  
“ with

“ with before your house. This is Mrs.  
“ Monson, continued he, presenting the  
“ lively widow, these two young ladies  
“ are her friends, and I dare say you  
“ will afford them every kind of accom-  
“ modation in your power.”

Singleton, both surprised and shocked at the unexpected freedom of this address, started back without casting a single look at either of the ladies, and hurried out of the room, muttering, that he would leave them to the care of his sister.

So strange and so unpolite a behaviour, was, at first, a matter of astonishment to the whole group, and to all the ladies, Mrs. Monson excepted: *She*, fancying that there was something more in it than mere rudeness, as Singleton's air and manner had nothing unusual, nothing disgusting in them, made a very

elegant apology for intruding upon the gentleman, to Mrs. Grace, adding, that if she would give them leave, they would only stay till her servants had procured another coach; but that if their company was in the least troublesome, she and her friends could walk, she believed, to the next town.

Mrs. Grace replied; "I beg, ma-  
"dam, that you and the ladies will give  
"yourselves no farther uneasiness: I  
"shall be extremely glad of your com-  
"pany, till your own carriage, or any  
"other to be procured, is ready to re-  
"ceive you. As for my brother, ma-  
"dam, continued she, you must not  
"mind *him*; he has only got a fit of  
"the fullens; a disorder with which he  
"is frequently troubled, and which  
"makes him a very bad companion.  
"It is better, therefore, for *him* to re-  
"tire, but I hope you and the ladies,  
"and

“ and this gentleman also—bowing to  
“ Mr. Hales—will do *me* the honour of  
“ staying with me, especially as I am  
“ happy in having two gentlemen from  
“ London—(turning to Revel and Bon-  
foy, and bowing to them) “ who are,  
“ I know, very capable of entertaining  
“ you, and good natured enough to af-  
“ sist me in making the house agreea-  
“ able.”

When Mrs. Grace had finished her speech, Revel told her that she did him and his friend a great deal of honour, and that nothing should be wanting on their sides.—“ I dare say, however, added he, that Mr. Singleton is only stepped into his library upon some business of importance, and that he will be with us again presently.”

D 3

Oh,

“ Oh, no! Sir;” replied Mrs. Grace, with much significance in her features; “ No, Sir—he will not come near us while these ladies are here, I assure you. Not that he can have any particular dislike to ladies whom he has never seen; but he has a strange opinion of all womankind, ma’am—continued she, turning to Mrs. Monson; “ and the handsomer they are, the more he avoids them.”

“ I suppose, madam, said Mr. Hales, he has been slighted by some *beauty*, and on her account, shuns a sex which too strongly reminds him of her.”

“ Ah! no, Sir, answered she, he never was in love in his life. He never was particular to any woman, but by having in a manner particularly rude to them. He carries his rudeness to them,

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“ them, indeed, so far, that I can hardly  
“ ever keep a maid for him.”

“ Umph!”—said Hales, with an arch  
twinkle of his eyes at Mrs. Monson.  
“ From his being ill used by one wo-  
“ man, he is, I imagine, disposed to be  
“ revenged on the whole sex.”

“ Lord bless me, cried Mis. Grace,  
“ raising her voice; you quite misunder-  
“ stand me; I tell you, that he never  
“ was used ill by any woman at all. He  
“ never would have the least connec-  
“ tion with them. He will not suffer  
“ me to hire a maid who is not ugly  
“ enough to frighten a horse: he will  
“ scarce let one come in his sight: I  
“ dare swear he would not let a maid  
“ make his bed, for more than I will  
“ speak of.”

D 4

“ Very

“ Very likely, madam, replied Hales;  
“ I have met with such gentlemen, but  
“ they have seldom been averse to a  
“ maids making their beds at any  
“ time.”

Here Revel could not keep his countenance any longer; and even Bonfoy's serious features curled into a smile--The widow pouted up her mouth, and one of the young ladies tittered a little under her hat, and began to blow her nose pretty much in order to escape observation. Mrs. Grace went on, endeavouring to convince Mr. Hales that her brother had a rooted aversion to all woman-kind, for which she never could, she said, give any reason.”

“ He has no reason to give, I dare say,  
“ madam”—said Hales.

“ No

“ No reason that *we* might think satisfactory, said Bonfoy, but yet, perhaps, he may be very well satisfied with it himself; for Mr. Singleton is a sensible, and I will venture to add a worthy man.”

“ You are extremely good, sir, replied Mrs. Grace, simpering, to speak up so generously for my brother; but it is all to purpose: However, though he has not had any thing to do with women, and though he, as well as I, might have been married over and over, we are both single you see—and yet I never had an aversion to men in my life.”

Revel bowed low, and with a smile which almost amounted to a laugh, said, that he would take upon him to thank her in the name of the whole sex.

Hales could hardly forbear interrupting him, so eager was he to tell Mrs. Grace that those men who were not married had frequently more to do with women than the married ones.

“ That may be, replied the lady, but  
“ my brother is quite another sort of a  
“ man; and to convince you that what  
“ I say is a fact, when he was quite a  
“ fine young fellow, some years ago—  
“ my brother has been very handsome,  
“ and young as well as other people”—

"Indisputably, madam, cried Revel,  
"hugging himself with the hopes of a  
"diverting anecdote."—

" When he was in the prime of his  
" youth, I say, sir, continued Mrs.  
" Grace, I happened to have a very  
" handsome girl to be my own maid—  
she

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“ she was a modest, and an exceeding  
“ good servant, and yet he could not  
“ bear the sight of her. I always ob-  
“ served that he looked another way  
“ whenever she came into the room  
“ where he was, and at last went out of  
“ it whenever he saw her. I thought  
“ his behaviour very extraordinary, as  
“ most men ran after her on purpose to  
“ catch a glance at her. I asked him  
“ one day, if Nanny had done any  
“ thing to offend him—He said *no*—  
“ in a great hurry—I then added—don’t  
“ you think she is pretty ?” “ I never  
“ minded her, replied he shortly.” “ In  
“ a few days afterwards, happening to  
“ tear his ruffle, in doing something in  
“ the garden, he came in with it hang-  
“ ing down—I called Nanny to come  
“ and stitch it, as there was no time for  
“ him to change his linen before din-  
“ ner. He refused to have it mended  
“ for a considerable time, I, at last,  
      however,

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“ however, laughed him into compli-  
“ ance with my intreaties: but really  
“ sir, had you seen him under Nancy’s  
“ hands, you would have been astonish-  
“ ed. He trembled, poor creature,  
“ like an aspin leaf, almost dislocated  
“ his neck in turning his head from her,  
“ and was altogether in such a flurry  
“ of spirits, that I actually thought he  
“ would have swooned away. In a  
“ short time afterwards I was obliged  
“ to dismiss the girl, because she was too  
“ free with the fellows, and my brother  
“ then insisted upon it that I should  
“ never take such a handsome ser-  
“ vant again: And yet, would you  
“ believe it, sir, though I always chuse  
“ the plainest maids I can meet with,  
“ and enquire very minutely into their  
“ age and character, there is no curing  
“ my brother of this insurmountable  
“ antipathy to women.—Indeed I have  
“ been deceived in this my precaution.

“ The

“ The last but one whom I hired, gave  
“ out that she was five and forty; yet  
“ for all that she had an accident and  
“ so I sent to search the parish register,  
“ as she was born and bred in the next  
“ town; and there I found that she was  
“ no more than six-and-thirty—Her  
“ hair, it seems, was turned grey, by  
“ a fright when she was eighteen, and  
“ that gave her an old look; though to  
“ be sure many instances may be pro-  
“ duced of women near fifty who have  
“ brought fine children into the world:  
“ So that there is nothing in age you  
“ see; nor indeed is there any saying  
“ when women will have done child-  
“ bearing.—This now makes me very  
“ cautious about the servants I hire,  
“ and I take care to pick out the most  
“ ill-favoured I can meet with. Thus  
“ you see, gentlemen, added she, that  
“ I have advanced nothing but the  
“ truth.”

Just

Just as she had spoken these words, and just as Hales had opened his mouth in order to answer her, Mr. Singleton, who had been endeavouring to get the better of a behaviour which was certainly inconsistent with the good sense he was master of, came into the room.— After having apologized for his absence by imputing it to some business that had detained him, he sat down among his guests, and, with apparent chearfulness, began to enter into conversation, without taking the least notice, however, of the women round him; though one of them, exceedingly pretty, sat next him. The accident of the preceding evening, and the present weather, were the subjects first discussed.— On a sudden, there was a tremendous clap of thunder— The most courageous man in the room started; the women, on hearing another, and a louder one, were thrown into the most terrible pannic.— Mrs. Grace was the

the only lady who discovered no timidity upon the occasion. She valued herself extremely upon her fortitude. Miss Ash, and Miss West, the two young ladies, both fainted; the former absolutely sunk upon the bosom of Singleton, near whom she sat; the latter was supported by Bonfoy, who ran to her assistance. Revel in the mean time, flew as eagerly to the side of Mrs. Monson, who, though she did not actually swoon, appeared to be considerably alarmed. Mr. Hales offered his assistance to Mrs. Grace, who, with a simper, thanked him for his civility, assuring him also, that she was not apt to be frightened.

While these several couples were exchanging their tokens of kindness and good-will to each other, Singleton, hastily starting up, threw off Miss Ash, who had reclined on him, and not only

ran

ran violently out of the room, but proceeded in a very precipitate manner to the garden ; though it still continued to thunder, lighten, and rain, to an uncommon degree.

By this very unexpected movement, the lady who had taken him for her protector, might have been much hurt, and was, undoubtedly, greatly terrified at receiving such treatment. To make amends for it, Revel offered to divide his services between her and the fair widow. Raising Miss Ash up, therefore, he placed her on a sopha, sat down by her, threw one arm round her waist, and with the other held an *Eau de luce* bottle to her nose, with which the widow, not quite so far gone, had furnished him. But his efforts to restore her, seemed to have but little effect ; for whether the lady's disorder was heightened by the strange behaviour of Singleton,

ton, or whether she really liked her new situation better, certain it is, that she remained, to all appearance, as senseless in Revel's arms, as if she had taken her last sleep.

Revel, not a little alarmed, begged Bonfoy, who was busied with Miss West, to seek after Mr. Singleton, and to desire him to come and help him.

Bonfoy was not, just at that moment, disposed to comply with his friend's request, as he had received a number of thanks from the half-revived Miss West for his assistance, and a number of apologies for her fears, delivered in the prettiest manner imaginable, with a blushing countenance, and downcast eyes, he knew not how to leave her. The distress of his friend, however, who could not with all his rubbing, pressing, squeezing, and even kissing her fair *sensible*

*sensible* [to relate things fairly it must be owned that he was very liberal of his kisses, while he leant his face down close to hers to discover if there was any life in her, not being able to bear the thoughts of her being lost for want of all necessary applications] prompted him at last, to go in search of Singleton. He found him in the most exposed part of the garden, standing with his hands spread out, and his face fronting the lightning, as if he braved the fury of the storm. On feeling Bonfoy's hand upon his shoulder, he started from his reverie, turned about, and asked hastily what was the matter.

What's the matter? replied Bonfoy, why the women are all terrified out of their senses, and the poor girl, in particular, whom you flung from your arms with such vengeance, is irrecoverable from the injury she sustained, both in

in her person and mind from your rough treatment, added to what she had suffered from her fright.

Singleton, who was, really, in spite of all his oddities, one of the most benevolent creatures in the world, felt himself much hurt by only hearing that *he* had occasioned any unhappiness to another. He felt, also, that he should do a considerable violence to his inclination by returning to the company; but his humanity, and natural sensibility so far conquered his aversion to women, that he *did* return with Bonfoy: nay, he brought himself to address an apology to Miss Ash, who was then recovered, for having left her so abruptly; it was easy to see that his apology cost him a good deal; she received it, however, in the most gracious manner, and made advances towards an intimacy with him: but these advances were so repelling, that

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that he retreated again to the garden. There he declared to Bonfoy, who followed him in hopes of prevailing on him to return, that he would rather venture the being wet to the skin, than expose himself to any further attacks of the kind he had met with.

“ Attacks? said Bonfoy—Why surely  
“ Miss Ash could never have behaved  
“ improperly, and before so many wit-  
“ neffes?”

“ You’re quite mistaken, answered  
“ Singleton; but you are young, and  
“ know little of women: you are the  
“ happier for your ignorance.—May  
“ you never experience the miseries  
“ which they are capable of inflicting  
“ upon those who are too warmly de-  
“ voted to them.”

Having

Having spoken these words, he walked away at such a rate, that he soon out-tripped Bonfoy.

Bonfoy, returning to the house, found the female part of the company pretty well recovered from the terror into which the storm had thrown them. Mr. Hales, rallying them upon their being so much frightened, told them, that thunder-storms were as much to be expected, according to the common course of nature, as trees full of leaves in summer, and bare branches in winter. "But, I " really believe, continued he, that you " often pretend to be frightened, on pur- " pose to have an opportunity to ex- " hibit yourselves in the most becom- " ing attitudes: attitudes, by which you " cannot distinguish yourselves so pret- " tily at another time. No young un- " married lady can decently recline " upon a young fellows bosom, or sink " into

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“ into his arms, but upon such animating occasions as these. All attitudes that discover beauties which ought to be concealed by young ladies before marriage, should be avoided by them, as they may, perhaps, prevent their being married at all.—You will, probably, think ladies; added he, that this is the surest way of making conquests, but it seldom recommends a woman to any man who is worthy of her attention.”

The two young ladies blushed up to the eyes at this speech, and even Mrs. Monson felt herself a little abashed at hearing the two girls under her immediate protection so tutored. Miss West was the daughter of a particular friend of hers, and Miss Ash was a young lady from London, whom her father, upon a visit to Mr. West, had left with his lady and daughter, in consequence of

of an invitation from them, though he had really brought her down with a view of her gaining the heart of young West, who was heir to an estate of between three and four thousand a year. As that gentleman, however, had only seemed inclined to play at making love, or had only thrown out a few soft things merely to amuse himself as well as the lady, she was not believed to be quite sure of him, and therefore there could be no harm in her trying her powers upon Singleton, who was not, she had heard, married, and, by the appearance of every thing about him, she supposed he had a good estate.

Singleton was certainly an amiable man, though his want of gallantry made him appear to great disadvantage in the eyes of most of the fair sex; and, indeed, the majority of women would have thought the character given of him,

him, by Mrs. Grace, quite sufficient to prevent their expecting to make an impression upon his heart. His want of gallantry, however, was no discouragement to Miss Ash: she saw something in Mr. Singleton, which, though it did not entirely answer her wishes, animated her to hope, that she might, at least, by perseverance, gain the point she aimed at, an advantageous settlement in life. She, therefore, determined to be upon her guard, and put on a reserve, which was not in the least natural to her. Miss West, on the other hand, who was really the character she appeared; mild, modest, and timid to excess, appeared to Bonfoy in a very amiable light.

Mrs. Monson, having considered upon what Mr. Hales had said as injurious, not only to the young ladies under her care, but when she took upon her to defend

defend *their* conduct, and affirmed, that how faulty soever women might appear to men on their being frightened, there were some, whose minds were so weakened by fear, that all their own efforts, *and the ridicule of the more sensible part of the creation*, added she, with an arch look at Hales—are equally insufficient to hinder them from making discoveries of their timidity. “Were *I* a man, “I should not admire a masculine defiance of all danger in a woman: our “very terrors, in my opinion, seem acknowledgments of our superior powers; superior strength of mind as well as of body. This consideration, I think, should make you more ready to protect us, more ready to pity us, and even to be pleased with the softness of our dispositions; a softness, naturally calculated to render us submissive, and, of course, complying.”

“ I stand corrected, madam, said Hales;  
“ but though you have so artfully clear-  
“ ed your sex of the imputation of folly  
“ and weakness with regard to their be-  
“ ing alarmed at real danger; how can  
“ you excuse them, when they scream  
“ at the sight of a spider, and faint at  
“ the sight of a frog. I knew a lady  
“ who carried her absurd fears to such a  
“ height, that she always fell into fits  
“ on the appearance of those animals;  
“ yet she would, at any time, eat a whole  
“ plate full of *croakers*, tossed up in a  
“ *ragout*, though she turned sick at the  
“ smell of a fine shoulder of mutton.  
“ Besides, Mrs. Monson, while I allow  
“ that your defence of your own sex is  
“ not a bad one, give me leave to add,  
“ for the benefit of these young ladies,  
“ that as nothing has a greater appear-  
“ ance of affectation, than fainting away  
“ at every apprehension of danger, so  
“ there is nothing so inconsistent with  
“ safety

“ safety as the giving way to a needless  
“ terror, which utterly disable people  
“ from even making the necessary at-  
“ tempt to deliver themselves from the  
“ impending evil: and tho’ every man  
“ would like to have a tender-hearted  
“ young creature running to him, from  
“ the dreaded danger, clap her arm un-  
“ his; and cling to him for protection;  
“ yet when a lady falls flat into a man’s  
“ arms, and drops down, apparently  
“ lifelesſ, upon his bosom, her behavi-  
“ our is altogether absurd; for she not  
“ only by so doing, prevents his con-  
“ veying her to a place of security, but  
“ is such a dead weight upon him, that  
“ she prevents him from saving either  
“ *her* or himself. I do not know what  
“ the ladies may think, but were I, by  
“ the foolish discovery of my own fears,  
“ to expose another person to mischief,  
“ I should, certainly, feel myself ex-  
“ tremely culpable. It is the duty, in-

“ deed, of every individual, man or wo-  
“ man, to exert themselves in every dan-  
“ gerous situation, and not to indulge  
“ any fears, real or affected, as they can  
“ never do them any kind of service,  
“ and *may* do them a great deal of harm.  
“ By giving the reigns to our fears, we  
“ effectually deprive ourselves of the  
“ means most likely to contribute to our  
“ preservation.”

By this last address to the women, Hales not only made the whole company laugh, but convinced them also, that what he had advanced with regard to their behaviour, under the operation of their fears, was advanced with judgment. He gained the greatest part, if not all of them, to his side of the question. Singleton and Bonfoy were particularly pleased with his good sense. Revel was tickled with his arch observations upon the carriage of the girls, and humorously

humorously told him, that as he was so thorough a master of propriety, he thought he would shew himself a true friend to the female sex, by writing a code of instructions for their conduct, during the rage of a thunder storm.

“ Or any other storm, said Singleton ;  
“ life is subject to different kinds of  
“ tempests ; and we ought to learn to  
“ conquer, or at least, to correct at our  
“ first setting out in life, all propensi-  
“ ties which may, uncontrolled, render  
“ every stage of it, afterwards, unhap-  
“ py.”

He concluded these words with a deep sigh, and for a considerable time seemed to be quite lost in thought; entirely regardless of the company: not so much as turning his eyes to any person present. This indifference, added to the quick coming on of the evening,

E 3 made

made Mrs. Monson very impatient to know if the carriage was repaired, or rather, if any other could be procured to carry them safe home. Mrs. Grace then politely begged her not to be uneasy, as they had very good beds, and could prepare three or four presently, if she and her friends would consent to stay till the next day.

Mrs. Monson, the young ladies, and Mr. Hales all made their acknowledgments, but the widow told her, at the same time, that she should be glad to return home that night, if possible, especially as Miss West had been committed to her care by her mother, who would, she was afraid be alarmed if she did not see them, or should hear of the accident they had met with. Upon enquiry, however, the coach could not be put into repair that night, and Mr. Singleton's chariot was gone to be painted; there

there was no avoiding, therefore, the acceptance of Mrs. Grace's offer. Mrs. Grace repeated her offer, but it was not echoed by her brother.

In consequence of Mr. Singleton's taciturnity upon the occasion, Mrs. Monson was rather scrupulous; and became still more desirous of a carriage to carry her home—but there was no possibility of getting one that evening. She accepted of Mrs. Grace's hospitable invitation at last, but with great reluctance.

Mrs. Grace was naturally of a friendly disposition, and particularly full of kindness when she took a fancy to any body. Besides, her spirits had been so elevated, her heart had been so enlarged by the pleasures of society; pleasures which she seldom enjoyed, that she thought she could not be too civil

to the people to whom she was indebted for them. She was highly pleased with Bonfoy, still more pleased with him, when she found that he was not remarkably attached to any other woman, and she liked Revel better when she thought that he laughed at them all. Even Hales too had a no small share of her favour: she said that he was a merry man, and that she was always an admirer of mirth, when it might be encouraged consistently with good manners. With a smiling countenance, therefore, she withdrew to order every thing for the convenience of her new guests. While *she* was gone, Revel took upon him to do the honours of the house, as Singleton seemed to be plunged in a deep reverie, and as Bonfoy was never much addicted to talking.

The

The return of Mrs. Grace put things upon a better footing. The *invited*, finding that they should be obliged to spend the evening at the hall, thought it was best for themselves as well as for their entertainers, to be as cheerful as possible. Besides, they all now became so very curious about Singleton, whose oddities were so different from any they had ever met with before, that they wished to develop the real cause of them: imagining it to be by no means a common one; as un-common, indeed, as the singularities springing from it.

Agreeable to the predominance of this curiosity, they endeavoured to turn the conversation upon different subjects, in hopes of discovering by his looks or behaviour, what had given rise to his strange antipathy to women, or rather dread of them; as he evidently shewed more fear *of* them, than aversion *to*

them. But though they went as far as they decently could, for the gratification of their curiosity, they could draw nothing from him sufficient to lead them to the point in view. He sat at the bottom of the table between Revel and Bonfoy, who, though almost as great strangers to him as Hales and the ladies, were evidently the favoured guests. To *them* he directed the little which he said: as to the women, he hardly looked at *their* faces; he spoke not a single word to them.

Revel, on their being summoned to supper, had proposed, for the better accommodation of the ladies, as well as for the promotion of diversified chat, that they should be intermixed with the men. This proposal, however, met with opposition from Singleton; he got Bonfoy, who began to feel a sort of partiality for *him*, and his opinions, to second

cond him, and carried his point however: if they were not absolutely merry, they were, at least, cheerful, and at a reasonable hour were conducted by the master and mistress of the hospitable mansion, to their respective apartments. Mrs. Monson had a chamber to herself: Miss West and Miss Ash slept together in another room.

About two o'clock in the morning, the whole house was awakened by the dreadful cry of fire.

This alarm made every body leap out of bed to learn where it was.

Revel and Bonfoy, the most ready, as well as the youngest and most active, were in an instant in the gallery which led to the several apartments. Smelling a great smoke, and stink like burning, they knocked at the first door they came to;

to; that door happened to belong to the room allotted to the young ladies, who stood trembling with fear. The two friends intreated them to open their door, that they might do all in their power to save them. Miss West, at first refused them entrance, but on Miss Ash's declaring aloud, that she would not lose her life, for *her* unseasonable prudery, immediately admitted the gentlemen; she even met Revel more than half-way, and readily suffered him to carry her down stairs, though she had but just thrown on her petticoats and gown; but Bonfoy could, on no account, prevail on Miss West to accompany him till she had tacked her stays together, and put on both a gown and handkerchief. As this necessarily took up some time, the smoak and the outcry increased.

Singleton

Singleton and Mrs. Monson being now roused from their pillows, happened to fall out of their apartments at the same moment. The former had on only his shirt and breeches; the latter only her dimity under petticoat, in which, it must be confessed, she made a very tempting appearance. She was finely formed; her skin was very white and soft, and she had a sufficient share of the *enbonpoint*, to render her a desirable object.

In this dress, or rather undress, Singleton met Mrs. Monson, and in a state, which must have excited compassion in the most unfeeling breast. "For the "love of heaven," cried she, trembling from head to foot, "save me: I am "almost frightened out of my sences."

She

She then, without staying for an answer, caught hold of him, and renewed her intreaties to him to save her.

“ I cannot save you, madam, replied he; ‘tis impossible, unless you will take some care of *yourself*.”

“ Oh! I can’t, said she, I can’t; in an agony of despair—sinking down at his feet, in a kind of fainting fit.” She appeared to *him*, indeed, in the most imminent danger of her life.

Stimulated by his natural humanity, he could not see her in such a helpless situation, unmoved: he could not refrain from relieving her. He attempted to take her up in his arms. By the violence of the motion, or by the uncommon closeness of the pressure, she instantly opened her eyes. Feeling herself,

self, as she thought, rather in a falling state, and willing to make her hold more secure, she flung her arms round his neck. By so doing she clung in such a cohering manner to him, that he became actually alarmed, and exclaimed, "Good Heavens, madam, what are you about? Let me go, or by"—

"Hush, sir—exclaimed she in her turn—what do you mean? I am only frightened out of my wits; do pray carry me to a place of safety, and I shall be obliged to you as long as I live. I shall owe that very life to you which you have preserved, continued she, clasping him still closer."

Singleton finding himself, at last, unable to support his fair suppliant in distress, was going to set her down. She then screamed, and loudly requested him again by all that was dear to him,

to

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to carry her quite out of the house, as she should be burnt to death if he did not remove her.

Just when she had finished the last words of her renewed intreaty with a raised voice, and was striving to hinder Singleton from setting her down, Revel, having conducted Miss Ash to a place of safety, was coming back to see if he could be of farther service.

“ Bless me madam, cried he, addressing himself to Miss Monson, “ what is the matter ?”

“ The matter, replied she, Oh ! I am frightened to death, and this insensible man was going to leave me in the midst of the fire.”

“ Surely not ; said Revel, with a half-smothered smile, I should have thought

“ thought, by your struggling, that  
“ you had been apprehensive of a much  
“ greater danger, were I not well ac-  
“ quainted with the modesty of Mr.  
“ Singleton ; but be composed, madam,  
“ the fire is extinguished.”

“ Oh lord ! cried *she*, let me go then,  
“ and put on my cloaths.”

Then, breaking hastily from Singleton, she ran back to her chamber in the utmost confusion, leaving *him* so much confounded that he could not articulate a syllable.

Revel told him that it was no wonder the lovely creature who had just quitted him, had put him quite out of himself.—She is indeed, a much finer woman than I imagined *she* was, added he ; but there is no doing justice, I see, to any woman

woman enveloped in a bundle of cloaths; the only way to form a true judgment of the beauties of the fair sex, is to strip them at once; and upon my soul, it is by much the fairest way in the world— No man, I dare swear, would, on seeing the widow only *dress'd*, suppose her to be so finely shaped as she is, and *we*, perhaps, should never have seen her in so beautiful a light, had not this evening's alarm hurried her out to exhibit herself in all her natural charms—“ I “ am glad to find you of my opinion, “ continued he,—you seem wrapt into “ an ecstacy about Mrs. Monson. But “ come—you need not despair—I know “ she likes you.”

Singleton, starting, as from a dream, having only heard the few last words, exclaimed hastily—“ Like *me*? I am  
“ certain

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“ certain she cannot like *me*. For my  
“ part I like *no* woman—But is the  
“ fire out?”

“ It is, said Revel smiling; and it  
“ was occasioned by one of your female  
“ servants leaving a candle in a long  
“ passage that one of the men might the  
“ more readily find his way to her  
“ chamber.”

“ Aye, replied Singleton; this comes  
“ of having people of different sexes  
“ in the same house. I was always for  
“ keeping only men, but my sister ne-  
“ ver would hear of it, and I am sure  
“ she will repent the not having follow-  
“ ed *my* advice—but I will have the  
“ wench made an example of. And  
“ yet—Oh!”—

Here he stamped, rubbed his hands,  
and hurried away.

Revel,

Revel, as much as ever at a loss to account for this strange behaviour, went after him. He soon met Mrs. Grace and Mr. Hales hand in hand; the former, with a sufficient quantity of cloaths on to be just decent, and yet not enough to conceal the beauties she had to discover, bridled, and curtseyed, and simpered, and seemed to be in a great fidget; declaring at the same time, that she never was so much frightened in her whole life, and that if Mr. Hales had not come to her assistance, she knew not what she should have done.—“ I am glad, however, continued she, that the fire is out, though it has made a vast confusion in the house. I hope the ladies are safe, and I hope too that as there was not so much danger as there appeared to be—according to my information—they will all, when a little composed, return to their beds, and get some rest.”

Hales,

Hales, winking at Revel, readily subscribed to what Mrs. Grace had delivered—But we must see how it is with Mrs. Monson, added he, and the girls first.

Revel told him that the two young ladies were safe at a little farm-house just by, to which Bonfoy and he had carried them—“ As to Mrs. Monson, con-  
tinued he, she has been under the pro-  
tection of Mr. Singleton, who, though  
“ he had taken care of *her*, seemed to  
“ want assistance very much himself.”

“ Aye, replied Mrs. Grace, I thought  
“ so: This has been a sad turbulent  
“ day for my poor brother, who does  
“ not speak to a woman, except myself,  
“ for half-a-year together sometimes;  
“ but it may do him good, and break  
“ him of that unaccountable fancy he  
“ has

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“ has taken to run away from women,  
“ as if they were scar-crows, while every  
“ other gentleman, knowing what is  
“ due to the sex, behaves to them ac-  
“ cordingly.”

The servants, assisted by the neighbours and tenants, having soon got the better of the fire, began now to put things into order again.

Mrs. Monson came down, quite drest, and blushing like the morn, to enquire after Miss West and Miss Ash, whom Bonfoy had brought back to the *ball*; from the former of those ladies he received the most grateful acknowledgments for snatching her, as she imagined, from the flames.

When all the family were assembled together — Singleton excepted — they congratulated

congratulated each other on their preservation, and talked over the cause of the accident which had so dreadfully alarmed them, and which had really been occasioned by the amour between the groom and the cook, though she, with a body twisted like a crooked Billet, was almost in a toothless condition, and had a forehead very roughly ploughed by old time.

Mr. Hales said that he had often wondered at a woman's being proud of her beauty, as the most ugly females in the creation are not without their admirers—"Here's a case in point, con-  
tinued he, quite sufficient to prove  
"that a pliant disposition, and a ten-  
"dency to be *kind*, are charms not to  
"be resisted."

Mrs.

Mrs. Grace, who laid a considerable stress upon personal perfections, more perhaps, than they deserved, and who, from not clearly comprehending the meaning of Mr. Hales's expressions, seemed inclined to dispute the propriety of them, replied, that she could not at all tell what he would be at—“ I  
“ have always read, continued she, that  
“ beauty was the only excitement of  
“ love, and I know it is a truth, say  
“ what you will to the contrary; but  
“ if people make use of words indeed  
“ which nobody understands except  
“ themselves, they may well have the  
“ best of an argument, though they  
“ may, nevertheless, be mistaken.  
“ However, I will look into Johnson's  
“ Dictionary, there I shall presently  
“ find out your meaning, and then I  
“ shall be ready to answer you in your  
“ own words,”

To this speech, Hales, laughing, made the following answer, "I am ready to give you all the satisfaction in my power."

Revel desired her to accept of the challenge, assuring her that he would be her second, and stand by her to the last.

This offer appeared so very polite a one, to Mrs. Grace, that she began immediately to set off in the character of a disputant.

Hales stopped her short, by telling her that her female Servant, by having, with all her ugliness, attractions enough to draw a man out of his own bed in the night, and make him venture to her in the dark, personally proved, the truth of what he had asserted.

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“ But he did not go in the dark, said  
“ Revel.”

“ True; but he certainly *would* have  
“ gone in the dark, said Hales, had not  
“ the grateful soul, fearful of his com-  
“ ing to any harm, placed a light for  
“ his guidance.”

“ It was most probable, therefore,  
“ said Bonfoy, that her kindness, and  
“ the advances she made to him, were  
“ the chief allurements; and from what  
“ has been mentioned, I should imagine  
“ that *they* had the greatest influence  
“ over her admirer; for kindness has  
“ peculiar charms — when joined to  
“ beauty, resistance is in vain.”

“ Aye now you speak to the purpose,  
“ said Mrs. Grace, beauty indeed does  
“ wonders without any kindness at all.”

Mrs.

Mrs. Grace, finding that none of her hearers were inclined to contradict her, again proposed to the ladies their retiring to rest themselves for a few hours; they all declared, however, that they had rather sit and chat till the usual time of rising.

When that hour arrived, a very genteel breakfast made its appearance; Singleton was summoned to it. He, at first, civilly refused compliance with the message he received, and sent his own man to desire the company to excuse his absence, as he did not feel himself very well.

As soon as breakfast was over, Singleton sent for the amorous domestic, of his own accord, reprimanded him severely for his carelessness, and assured him that he would not keep such people in his house.

The offending fellow replied, that if his *worship* would hire no man who had not as great a dislike to the sex as himself, he must be his own servant, and do his own business ; adding, that no such men, he would venture to say, were to be met with ; that he should not have meddled with the wench if she had had not began first ; that it was a very difficult thing for a man to refuse a woman when he was *axed* ; and that he hardly believed any man in the world, except his *honour*, could have had the heart to say *no* in his condition. “ He “ proceeded with hoping his *worship* “ would consider him, as it was not in any “ man’s power to do as his *honour* did, “ and prayed him not only to pardon “ him but to let him keep his place, as “ he could not bear the thoughts of “ leaving his *honour*. He concluded “ with giving his master a broad hint, “ that

“ that if he turned away *Betty*, he could  
“ not *do any burt* with her when she  
“ was gone.”

“ Neither can she *do any burt* by her-  
“ self, as you call it, said Singleton;  
“ she has as much reason to expect to  
“ stay as you have, but I will dismiss  
“ you both, you have both offended,  
“ and you must both go, and directly.”

“ I *wishes* your worship would make  
“ it your own case, replied the fellow,  
“ and then I am *artin* you would not  
“ be so cruel.”

This answer, as it appeared to contain a sort of a reflection upon *him*, prompted Singleton to discharge the deliverer of it without delay. When he had finished his discharge, he sent for Mrs. Grace, and insisted upon her turn-away the cook immediately.

“ Your orders will be sooner obeyed  
“ than mine,” said the lady, who was  
not very well pleased at being fetched  
from her company. “ She is your ser-  
“ vant—added she—and not mine.”

“ She is so—but as you have had the  
“ command of *my* servants, and more  
“ particularly of those of your own sex,  
“ who I abhor and detest, and will not  
“ have any thing to do with; I desire  
“ you to send Betty away: I beg I may  
“ never see her again; I beg, also, that  
“ you will get another maid still more  
“ forbidding, if possible: so very for-  
“ bidding, that no man may be tempted  
“ to touch her.”

“ Why really, said Mrs. Grace, one  
“ would have thought there had been  
“ few charms in Betty; but some men  
“ will not let women alone be they ever  
“ so ugly: and, therefore, if you would  
“ put

“ put a stop to all doings of this kind  
“ in your house, you must take care of  
“ your men, that they are sober, and  
“ well disposed.”

“ Aye, replied he, with a sigh; but  
“ let men be ever so well disposed, sister  
“ —some women—

Here he paused, stamped upon the floor, lifted up his eyes to heaven, and uttered something softly to himself; then rubbing his forehead, he thus proceeded—“ Well! I cannot talk any more about this affair now—only get the most forbidding servant you can—  
“ she cannot be too frightful.”

“ G—d deliver me brother! What  
“ do you mean? You are enough to  
“ make any body mad, to wish to have  
“ every woman frightful?”

“ Happy—most happy would it be  
“ for us, replied he with additional  
“ energy, were ye all the most hideous  
“ objects which nature can possibly  
“ create; were ye vipers and scorpions;  
“ most loathsome to the sight, most fa-  
“ tal to the touch—Were ye—

“ Mercy on me! exclaimed Mrs.  
“ Grace,” interrupting him in the midst  
of his execrating effusions. “ What a  
“ noise you make for nothing? Really,  
“ brother, you talk a good deal of non-  
“ sense.”

“ And do you think to make me talk  
“ otherwise by telling me so?—Never.  
“ You will, indeed, drive me quite out  
“ of my house, by a behaviour that is  
“ most intolerably provoking: or else  
“ you will oblige me to turn away every  
“ female in it, and to be served only by  
“ my own sex.”

With

With this menace, Mr. Singleton left his sister to put what construction she pleased upon it.

Mrs. Grace returned to the company, not a little fluttered with what she had heard: she tried, however, to compose herself as much as possible.

Mr. Monson, Miss West, Miss Ash, and Mr. Hales, a coach being now ready to receive them, prepared to bid adieu to their friendly entertainers.

It was a long time before Mr. Singleton could be prevailed upon to appear again, but, at last, Bonfoy, having undertaken to *bring him forward*, succeeded—though almost a stranger, succeeded: yet nobody—not even Bonfoy, could persuade him to accept of the invitation which Mr. Hales and Mrs. Monson gave *him* and Mrs. Grace, to

spend some time with them in return for the great civilities they had met with at *bis* house.

Mr. Hales, before he left the hospitable mansion, pressed Revel and Bonfoy, also, very strongly, to come and see him, as he lived not many miles from Singleton-hall. — “ I am not a married man, ” added he, but I have no sort of aversion to women. I have a great respect, indeed, for the fair sex in general, and am never so happy, as when “ I have a groupe of females about me: “ to say truth, I cannot do without them; they are, in my opinion, absolutely necessary for the high enjoyment of life.”

At the close of this speech in praise of women, Singleton sighed so profoundly that he almost groaned. Without saying a single word to the ladies, he turned away

away short, and went into the house, leaving his two newly acquired friends to assist Mrs. Monson and the young ladies in getting to their carriage, which whirled them along with more velocity than they desired, as they did not at all dislike their situation at *Singleton-ball*.

As soon as they were gone, Mrs. Grace, though not by any means pleased with what her brother had said to her, proceeded to execute his commands by the dismission of the offending Betty: she discharged her from her service with a very smart reproof for the indelicacy of her conduct, and ordered immediate enquiries to be made after another to supply her place; but as Mr. Singleton had expressed himself with particular warmth against her whole sex, she began to be apprehensive lest he should make his words good, and actually send all her maids packing: she, therefore, ordered

dered the most disgusting figures in the whole county to be asked for.

Revel and Bonfoy, who were favoured with an invitation from Singleton to stay longer with him, were exceedingly diverted with the persons who presented themselves; unfortunately, however, they had as little merit as beauty to recommend them; consequently, not one of them appeared to Mrs. Grace capable of undertaking a business of such importance as the sending up her brother's dinner. At length a woman offered her service who had a very bad hair-lip, but as the upper part of her face was tolerable, as her eyes were large, black and lively, and as her complexion was very fair and clear, Mrs. Grace said her brother would, probably, make objections to her? She would not, therefore, venture to take her, though the girl appeared to do every thing required

quired of her, and was extremely well spoken of by the person with whom she lived last. However, not chusing to give the true reason, she told her that she did not care to take any body who had not had the small-pox.

The girl told her that she was sure she should suit her; adding, that she could be inoculated at any time.

“ I will let Mr. Singleton know what you say;” replied she.

Accordingly she took the first opportunity to describe her person to her brother, who answered abruptly--“ I would not have you wait for the inoculation of any servants: *that* has done more mischief in the world than any one thing I know of, by preserving the persons of so many women, it has made them vain and insolent; or else

“ it

“ it has, by rendering them objects of  
“ desire, drawn in many a man to be  
“ deceived by them. No—no—inocu-  
“ lation has been the destruction of  
“ numbers of both sexes, who might  
“ have been innocent and happy, had  
“ not their attracting exteriors proved  
“ fatal to them.”

Revel and Bonfoy, who were pre-  
sent, discovered great surprize at hear-  
ing him talk in this manner. The  
former said—“ Few people, sir, are, I  
“ believe, of your opinion! you are the  
“ only man who ever shewed any dislike  
“ to a fine woman; and I am afraid,  
“ your aversion results more from the  
“ ill treatment which you have met with  
“ from *some* ladies, than from any na-  
“ tural antipathy to the fair sex in  
“ general.”

“ Ill-treatment?” cried Singleton, staring at him—“ Ill-treatment?” continued he, repeating the words in a disturbed manner—“ Oh, that I had!—

Here he stopped—then, seeming to recollect himself, he said, with a composed countenance, “ No — You are “ mistaken, gentlemen. I have not had, “ I will not have any connections with “ a sex whom I pity, while I detest them : “ let us quit a subject which cannot be “ greatly entertaining to *you*, and which “ is very disagreeable to *me*.

He then instantly turned the conversation, and soon afterwards left them, in order to enjoy his own thoughts without interruption.

Mrs. Grace, on the departure of her brother, seized that opportunity to indulge herself in giving Bonfoy all decent  
encou-

encouragement; imagining that he had been too long prevented from discovering his passion for her. She now expected him to disclose it in the most respectful, yet tender terms; and, therefore, sat preparing herself to answer him in a style, by which she might, without appearing too forward, animate him with the most flattering hopes, having thought that if he was elevated with some expectations, he would not presume to open his lips upon the subject on which she wished to hear him expatiate: a subject, indeed, of which she could never be weary.— Where is the woman who is ever tired of hearing a man tell her that he loves her; especially, a woman who has almost lived beyond the age of admiration.

Mrs. Grace seated herself in such an attitude as not to lose a syllable of what Bonfoy said, and edged nearer and nearer

to

to enjoy his conversation to the very utmost, watching every motion of his eyes, which she expected to be fixed upon *her*.

Having waited a decent time; without finding him disposed to throw himself at her feet in the character of an *amorofo*, she turned round full upon him, and to her great mortification, saw him attentively examining a picture. As the picture under his examination was very near her, she felt herself not a little chagrined at her disappointment: but, being still unwilling to be mistaken, she fancied that it was his extreme modesty which prevented his behaving like other men in love. She began to think, also, that so rare a virtue in a man might be carried too far, and that she had no time to lose—And yet she knew that she could not, as a woman--without militating strongly against *female decorum*, enter

ter upon such an affair. However, as things were circumstanced, and as her companion appeared rather shy, she believed that there could be no impropriety in trying to accelerate matters, by pushing him on to make a declaration. [A declaration he had not once thought of.] With this design she edged still closer to him. Mistaking her meaning, and supposing that he was in the way, he rose hastily, begged her pardon, and removed to a considerable distance. This proceeding entirely disconcerted her; it was a *manœuvre*, so unexpected, that it threw her quite out of her play: yet, as there was such excessive politeness in his procedure; such a fear of offending her, she continued to believe that his diffidence alone sealed up his mouth.—How to remove that diffidence was the thing.—She had not been accustomed to make any indiscreet advances, but as an amiable young fellow

low was now the object in view, she thought she might venture to stretch a little; she, therefore, followed him, and told him, seemingly half in jest, though never so much in earnest; that he had nothing to apprehend; that he might say what he pleased, as she was ready to hear him.

The looks which accompanied this very broad hint, were sufficiently explanatory, but he would not understand the meaning of her expressions, and his perverseness, at last, rendered her so impatient, that, in spite of her unwillingness to expose herself, she was actually just upon the point of saying something more *ad hominem*.

At that instant her brother returned to them, and told Bonfoy that his friend wished to speak with him.

Bonfoy,

ter upon such an affair. However, as things were circumstanced, and as her companion appeared rather shy, she believed that there could be no impropriety in trying to accelerate matters, by pushing him on to make a declaration. [A declaration he had not once thought of.] With this design she edged still closer to him. Mistaking her meaning, and supposing that he was in the way, he rose hastily, begged her pardon, and removed to a considerable distance. This proceeding entirely disconcerted her; it was a *manœuvre*, so unexpected, that it threw her quite out of her play: yet, as there was such excessive politeness in his procedure; such a fear of offending her, she continued to believe that his diffidence alone sealed up his mouth.—How to remove that diffidence was the thing.—She had not been accustomed to make any indiscreet advances, but as an amiable young fellow.

low was now the object in view, she thought she might venture to stretch a little; she, therefore, followed him, and told him, seemingly half in jest, though never so much in earnest; that he had nothing to apprehend; that he might say what he pleased, as she was ready to hear him.

The looks which accompanied this very broad hint, were sufficiently explanatory, but he would not understand the meaning of her expressions, and his perverseness, at last, rendered her so impatient, that, in spite of her unwillingness to expose herself, she was actually just upon the point of saying something more *ad hominem*.

At that instant her brother returned to them, and told Bonfoy that his friend wished to speak with him.

Bonfoy,

Bonfoy, glad to be released, though he scarcely knew why, as he had not then discovered Mrs. Grace's designs upon him, quitted the room immediately.

Mrs. Grace was in so peevish a humour at feeling herself disappointed, that she could hardly disguise her sensations. At last a thought darted into her head—She determined to make the very interruption which had proved so mortifying, serviceable to her. She resolved to open the business to her brother, and to desire his advice and assistance in an affair, in the management of which great delicacy was required.

When she had made her intended disclosures, Singleton stared, and looked astonished—After a short pause, he asked

ed her very seriously if she had not lost  
her sensibility.

“ And why so impertinent a ques-  
“ tion ? said she—Do I look like a mad  
“ woman ? ”

“ No, replied he ; but nobody can  
“ talk more like one than you do at  
“ present.—Is it possible, continued he,  
“ that a woman of your years and ap-  
“ pearance, can think of uniting your-  
“ self to a man young enough to be  
“ your son ? A man to whom you must  
“ ever look more like a mother than a  
“ wife ? A man ? A mere boy—in per-  
“ son—though a man in understanding ;  
“ and I dare affirm that he would be  
“ shocked beyond expression to hear of  
“ your entertaining any thought of him  
“ as a husband. Indeed, indeed, sister,  
“ there is a grossness in your choice of  
“ such

“ such a young fellow which hurts me,  
“ and which I could not have expected  
“ in a woman whose age, and apparent  
“ modesty promised uncommon discre-  
“ tion. Where shall we look for pro-  
“ priet ybut in persons whose years and  
“ experience in life encourage us to  
“ hope for it in them? And how mortifi-  
“ ed must all thinking people be to be-  
“ hold those of whom they have the  
“ highest opinion, lessen themselves in  
“ the most degrading manner? Any wo-  
“ man who appears eager after a young  
“ fellow, departs from that decency by  
“ which she ought to distinguish her-  
“ self; but to see an old woman seized  
“ with such an eagerness—it is abso-  
“ lutely insupportable: little did I ex-  
“ pect to see any person related to *me* act  
“ in a manner so diametrically opposite  
“ to reason and virtue; for I will  
“ maintain it”—

“ Hold,

“ Hold, cried Mrs. Grace interrupting him, (her patience being quite exhausted)--hold—You run on too fast; you are perfectly scurrilous. What can you mean by talking so? I am not old; you know it; and nobody can have greater horror at any thing the least indelicate than I have, you discover the grossest indecency yourself by treating me in this manner. But indeed you are so strange a character, that it is no wonder you find fault with every body who is of a different way of thinking.—You have made yourself so very ridiculous, so very contemptible indeed to every body, and especially to the gentlemen now with us, that it is not at all surprising you should be the subject of their mirth.”

"Who I?--replied Singleton; I, the  
subject of their mirth?"--Then--after a  
little

little pause, he thus proceeded—“ Well  
“ if I am really so absurd as you tell  
“ me I am, were you not infinitely  
“ more so in fixing upon so ridiculous  
“ and contemptible a person to carry  
“ your amorous messages.”

“ To carry *my* amorous messages,  
“ brother? exclaimed Mrs. Grace—I  
“ wonder what you mean—I am quite  
“ ashamed to hear you talk so.”—

“ Yes; but you are not ashamed to  
“ act in the most foolish and indelicate  
“ manner that can be, you may not  
“ think yourself old—few women do  
“ I suppose—but you are certainly  
“ much too old for so fine a young fel-  
“ low as Bonfoy. Besides, there is a  
“ degree of madness in your having  
“ an idea of connecting yourself with a  
“ stranger; a man whom you never saw  
“ till within these few days.”

“ Why

“ Why, if you come to that, replied  
“ she, there are full as many objections  
“ to be made to your inviting him to  
“ stay; as he is quite as much a stranger  
“ to you as he is to me.”

*But who fitted arm'd with a sword*

“ Very true, answered Singleton, but  
“ her connections are of a very different  
“ nature. Men may be acquainted with  
“ men from whom a woman would shrink,  
“ as if his approach was contagious.—I  
“ don’t mean to insinuate that Revel and  
“ Bonfoy are of this sort—No—they have  
“ all the marks of gentlemen about them—  
“ had they, however, been less genteel and  
“ agreeable, they had a claim to my hos-  
“ pitality—My doors have ever been open  
“ to all such men—to all men, I would  
“ throw them open, wishing to be a friend  
“ to all my fellow-creatures—Yet I wish,  
“ at the same time, that my sister would  
“ not—nay, I insist upon it, that she will  
“ not expose herself in a manner so un-

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“ becoming. *We* are allowed privileges  
“ of which you cannot avail yourselves,  
“ without injuring your reputation, as  
“ well as proving disgusting in our eyes.  
“ When a woman takes or permits li-  
“ berties, she becomes both odious and  
“ despicable.”—

“ In your opinion, perhaps,” replied Mrs. Grace, with a look of infinite contempt; “ but other men think in an-  
“ other way.”

“ Bonfoy thinks as I do:” said Mr. Singleton.

At that instant, Bonfoy, returning to the room, and hearing his name mentioned, asked Singleton if he was talking of *him*.

“ Yes, replied he; I said what I will  
“ maintain, that you look upon women  
“ in

“ in the same light as I do; that you  
“ think them trifling, capricious, incon-  
“ sistent creatures; plagues from the  
“ beginning of the world, and likely to  
“ continue so to the end of it.”

“ You are very severe, sir,” said Bon-  
foy with a smile; “ but if you have  
“ found one woman so, you will not,  
“ I hope, condemn the whole sex for  
“ *ber.*”

Here the justice changed colour,  
stamped on the floor, and muttered some-  
thing to himself. Then, as if fearful  
of saying more than he ought, he hurried  
out of the room, leaving Mrs. Grace  
once more with Bonfoy.

Mrs. Grace, in spite of all that her  
brother had mentioned in opposition to  
her inclination, was determined to make

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the most of this *second* opportunity: but she was, a second time, disappointed.

Revel, having seen enough of Singleton's humours, and asked his friend if he did not design to pursue his journey, now came to settle every thing for their departure that afternoon, as there was just time enough for them to get to the next stage without being benighted.

Mrs. Grace started at hearing this intelligence; at finding that she was going to lose the man whom she wished to have her lover. She said every thing she could think of to prevail on the two friends to stay a little longer, but finding she could not succeed, she went and fetched down her brother, that *he* might try whether *his* persuasions would prove efficacious.

Singleton

Singleton was particularly concerned at parting with Bonfoy, and in consequence of his chagrin, said and did every thing in his power to detain him, but all to no purpose: he was resolved to go at all events, whether Revel went or no; he promised, however, as well as his friend, to return to the *ball* in a very short time, if he would then give them his company in a tour they intended to make, if they did not meet what they were in search of in a few days.

Mr. Singleton consented.

After having taken leave of *him* and Mrs. Grace, and called on Taps to bid him farewell, the young travellers pursued their *route* towards Wales.

Just before dark, they took notice of a neat little dwelling with a white

rustic front, green window shutters, and green paling. The neatness of the building, and its wild romantic situation, struck Bonfoy in such a manner that he could not help stopping, and telling his companion it was the very sort of place in which he should like to settle, as it appeared to be retired without being quite solitary.

While Bonfoy was passing by this house, Revel called to a man at work, and asked him who lived in it.

He replied, that nobody lived in it; as the gentleman who owned it was weary of living at all.

“ How’s that? said Revel.”

“ Why master, replied the fellow,  
“ he spent every thing he had as fast as  
“ he could, and so he has nothing to  
“ live

“ live upon; and that you know, con-  
tinued he, plainly shews he is weary  
of living, or else he would not have  
brought himself to such a pass.”

Bonfoy, who had not yet spoke, thinking there was an odd kind of a simplicity in this informant not at all disagreeable, and conceiving some hopes from what he had let out of becoming a purchaser of the house, asked him where the owner of it was to be found.

“ Why as to that, answered the fellow, it may be no easy matter to tell you: for I question whether he knows himself: in short, sir, he is out of his mind, and if so be in such a case a man can give any account of himself or his affairs, 'tis more than I know.”

“ But I suppose you can tell where those who have the management of

“ his affairs are to be met with?” said Bonfoy.

“ Why you must ax squire West at “ the *grove* yonder.”

“ Well but cannot we, in the mean time, said Revel, see the house, as there seems to be somebody on the spot to shew it.”

“ Squire West, replied the man, has put in somebody till he can dispose of it.”

Bonfoy then desired him to knock at the door, and ask if they might see the house.

A tight young girl opened the door, and upon Bonfoy’s advancing and repeating the question he had addressed to

to the countryman, said she would go, and ask her mistress.

She returned in a few moments and asked the two friends to walk in.

The person to whom she introduced them was sitting in a pleasant parlour, furnished in an elegant style, and had a very amiable appearance; though she had rather a melancholy one. She advanced, however, with her work in her hand to welcome the unknown visitors.

The two travellers made the politest apologies they could for their intrusion. Bonfoy added, that on being informed the house was to be disposed of, he had taken the liberty to desire to see it: but that if the gratification of his curiosity would be attended with

the least inconvenience, he begged his request might be denied.

The lady replied with a most obliging smile, that she could venture to affirm he could not make any improper request, and that she would, therefore, readily shew him the house.

Revel, tickled at the satisfaction which visibly sparkled in her eyes while she cast them on those of his friend, and the insensibility with which he beheld *her*, tipped him a significant glance: that glance, however, seemed to be quite thrown away upon him, as well as the looks of his fair conductress, who, after having explained to him every convenience and inconvenience belonging to the habitation in question, desired him and his friend to sit down and accept of some refreshments.

The

The latter kind offer they both refused; but as Revel made a motion to accept of the former, Bonfoy could not well decline it.

When they were seated, the lady told them that it was not in her power either to lett the house, or to sell it.  
" It is at present my brother's property,  
" if—continued she with a sigh—a man  
" judged to be insane, can be said to have  
" a legal title to any. But Mr. West, at  
" the *grove*," added she, while a second  
sigh heaved her gentle bosom, " is our  
" friend, and has promised that I shall  
" not suffer from my elder brother's in-  
" sanity, or from my younger brother's  
" tyranny. He will not, he says, part  
" with the house, except I have the li-  
" berty of occupying a room in it, and  
" I am very ready to make the house  
" as agreeable as I can to the gentleman  
" who

“ who comes into the possession of the  
“ estate.”

So odd, and so uncommon a proposal disconcerted Bonfoy, but Revel was not a little diverted with it. The former rose immediately to go: but the latter, having entered into conversation with the lady, seemed to be loth to accompany his friend; finding him, however, determined to depart, he took leave also: and when he had requested the servant to inform him which was the way to Mr. West's, struck into that road with great eagerness.

Bonfoy, not quite satisfied with his route, asked him whither he was hurrying.

“ To West's, replied he, about *your*  
“ house.”

“ Stay

“ Stay a little, then, said Bonfoy: it  
“ will not do for me.”

“ That is more than you can tell;  
“ let us hear the terms; it appears to  
“ be the very place you was wishing  
“ for.”

“ The situation and the house are,  
“ I allow, both desirable, but—

“ What?—Is not the inhabitant as  
“ desirable also? She seems to me to be  
“ a very fine, warm, romantic genius—  
“ and exceedingly proper for a compa-  
“ nion in the country, where a man may  
“ be puzzled to find out a soft soothing  
“ female for the summer season.”

“ She may be so, said Bonfoy, gravely,  
“ but she will not suit *me*.

“ Pshaw!

“ Pshaw! I hope you have not  
“ learnt of Singleton to shun the whole  
“ sex.”—

“ Do I shun the whole sex, because I  
“ do not chuse to live in a house with a  
“ strange woman whom I know nothing  
“ of?”

“ That would be no objection to me—  
“ The more strange she is, the more di-  
“ verting she will be: I am sure, at  
“ least, she will be *new*; and novelty is  
“ always agreeable.”

“ It may be so to you, but I am of a  
“ different opinion.”

“ Well! let us go to West, however,  
“ said Revel, and make some enquiries  
“ about her. She appears to me to be  
“ an oddity in her way, as well as Sin-  
“ gleton.”

Bonfoy

Bonfoy finding that he could not turn his friend from his purpose, followed him to the *grove*.

On desiring to speak with Mr. West, they were conducted into a parlour, in which all the family happened to be assembled. Among the rest, Bonfoy recognized the Miss West whom he had so lately seen at *Singleton-ball*.

A crimson blush immediately overspread the face of that young lady, as she rose at his entrance; and upon her father's looking at her as if he wanted an explanation of her behaviour, she announced Mr. Bonfoy as the man who had saved her the night on which she was alarmed by the cry of fire, at Mr. Singleton's house.

It was now Bonfoy's turn to blush at the civil things she said of him to her father,

father, who paid him, directly, all proper acknowledgments. Revel, seeing that his friend was rather embarrassed, interposed.—“ We come, Sir, said he, “ to Mr. West, to desire one information about the little cottage in your “ neighbourhood, which my fellow-traveller wishes to purchase.”

Bonfoy, as soon as he had spoken those words, frowned on him, that he might say no more; but all his signals were disregarded—Revel proceeded, and asked a number of questions relating to the house, and the present inhabitant of it, who appeared to be, he added, so agreeable, that no body could have the least objection to her society.

Bonfoy frowned on him again, but as he either did not, or would not see his correcting looks, he went on with saying that he thought the lady discovered

vered something of a *character*, and that there appeared a great deal of originality about her.

“ Yes, replied Mr. West, she is an original, indeed, poor girl! she is not so happy as we could wish her; and yet I believe her unhappiness is, somehow, owing to herself. She very early in life took a fancy to read nothing but romances; and in reading them has not only greatly mis-spent her time, but most absurdly regulated her plan of life upon them entirely. This course of reading has thrown her into perplexities from which she will find it difficult to disengage herself; she has, however, made herself so familiar with perplexities, that she is not affected by things which would prove extremely distressing to other people. She is actually fond of entanglements and embarrassments; and does not, I believe,

“ believe, undertake the most trifling  
“ affair in life, without consulting her  
“ favourite authors about the manner  
“ in which she is to conduct herself.  
“ Her imagination too is so quick, and  
“ she has such an exuberance of ro-  
“ mantic ideas, that she starts more ex-  
“ pedients in a minute, than other peo-  
“ ple with sober fancies can think of in  
“ a twelve month. But then she meets  
“ with frequent disappointments by act-  
“ ing agreeably to her own false ideas  
“ of propriety: and her actions, in con-  
“ sequence of those ideas, frequently  
“ make her appear to others in a very  
“ disadvantageous light: a light in  
“ which she would never, it is proba-  
“ ble, appear, if her head was as free  
“ from error, as her heart is from evil.  
“ Setting aside this romantic part of her  
“ character, she is a sensible, agreeable  
“ woman. She lived very tolerably with  
“ Mr. Malpas till he died: so little  
“ then

“ then remained for her, that I, who  
“ am one of her trustees, invited her  
“ down here to stay till she could meet  
“ with a place more to her mind. Soon  
“ afterwards her brother purchased the  
“ cottage you mentioned, and pressed  
“ her to come and live with him, de-  
“ claring, that whether he married or  
“ not, she should always have a room  
“ in the house—She accepted of his of-  
“ fer; but—I don’t know how it hap-  
“ pened—nor where the fault lay—Mr.  
“ Burton was obliged, by having lived  
“ too fast, to abscond. He has since  
“ been much disordered in his head, as  
“ he was imprudent in the management  
“ of his affairs. He is now confined  
“ to a mad-house. His sister remains  
“ in the cottage, but it must be dis-  
“ posed of for the benefit of his credi-  
“ tors. Nobody, however, has yet been  
“ willing to purchase it, because Mrs.  
“ Malpas claims a right to continue in  
“ the

“ the apartment in which her brother  
“ placed her.”

“ Her continuance can be no objection, I imagine, said Revel hastily ; “ I am certain, indeed, that no man can disapprove of the society of so agreeable a lady.”

Here Bonfoy frowned again, and even jogged his friend ; but finding that he paid no regard to his hints of any sort, that all his signs could not make him hold his tongue about him, exclaimed at last—“ Are you mad, Revel ? ”

“ Not quite, replied he, to suffer you to neglect such an opportunity of settling yourself so pleasantly.”

“ You surely do not know what you are talking of,” said Bonfoy, colouring

ing with vexation; and the more so, as having accidentally cast his eyes on Miss West, he saw hers fixed on *him*: he also saw violent changes in her countenance, pale and red by turns. He was now, therefore, doubly disconcerted: he was totally ashamed of his friend, who though sincerely attached to him, yet, from the unluckiness of his temper, which prompted him to enjoy and promote a scene of the kind before him, could not hinder himself from carrying it as far as it would go.

Bonfoy had often endured this humour of his friend with great patience, and has even joined in the laugh, but felt himself at this time by no means inclined to be pleased with his mirth. Revel perceived the uneasy situation of his mind, and as plainly discerned the cause of it, which Bonfoy himself, tho' a party concerned, had not quite so clearly

clearly discovered. He found himself more and more embarrassed and confused on being exposed before Mr. West and his family, yet Revel paying small attention to his painful sensations, continued to praise the cottage, and to mix encomiums on the present inhabitant of it.

Mr. West, who appeared willing to get rid of the cottage in question, took advantage of the silence of Bonfoy, which he construed into acquiescence, and pressed both him and Revel to spend the evening with him: adding, that they might, the next day, take another view of the place.

Revel very readily consented; but Bonfoy would on no account accept of the invitation. He did not, indeed, absolutely refuse to come to terms relating to the purchase of the cottage; on

on the contrary, he rather seemed willing to treat about it, but discovered at the same time, an eager desire to remove to an inn in the neighbourhood to which they had ordered their horses. Revel, however, ever disposed to company and mirth, over-ruled the last motion, and prevailed upon his friend to stay where he was.

During the whole evening no creature could be more lively and entertaining than Revel; nobody ever sat more silent than Bonfoy. As Miss Ash was still at the *grove*, the former renewed his acquaintance with *her* and Miss West.

Miss West appeared reserved, but when Singleton and his oddities were mentioned, both the ladies said that though they were alarmed at the accident which had brought them to Singleton-

gleton-hall, they were not sorry they had seen the owner of it, as they had long before heard of his particularities, but never could find any body able to account for them.

Miss Ash said she thought Mrs. Grace seemed to be in every respect as odd as her brother, though in a very different way.

Revel subscribed to her opinion, adding, however, that there was a noble spirit of benevolence and hospitality in both, which made large amends for any failings either of them might discover. "Were they, indeed, continued he, of different, of less animated dispositions, the diversion which their singularities afford their friends carries an apology for them."

Miss

Miss West particularly assented to this; and her assent drew Bonfoy's eyes upon her: but he said nothing.

At an early hour after supper, the travellers both insisted upon retiring to their inn, though Mr. West very strongly invited them to accept of apartments at *his* house.

As soon as they were by themselves, Revel asked Bonfoy whether he intended to treat about the cottage.

“ I never saw a place which I liked better for its situation, replied he, “ and if West, who has, I find, the disposal of it, and I can agree about the terms, I shall not hesitate a moment.”

“ It is too small, I think, said Revel, “ and at too great a distance from London, to come very high.”

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“ If

“ If I could get possession of it with-  
“ out any incumbrances—

“ Why, you do not, I hope, said  
“ Revel laughing, call the widow an  
“ incumbrance?”

“ Indeed but I do, replied Bonfoy;  
“ and cannot think of buying a house  
“ to give her a part of it: I can amuse  
“ myself with characters I meet with  
“ abroad, but do not chuse to have  
“ them brought home to me.”

The next day Mr. West called on  
them, and appeared very desirous of  
coming to an agreement with Bonfoy,  
who persisted in declining it, if Mrs.  
Malpas adhered to her supposed right.

Revel then laughing, told West that  
his friend might possibly have a lady  
of his own to place in the cottage.

“ What?

“ What? Is he going to be married?  
“ said West.”

Bonfoy himself answered in the negative: declaring, however, at the same time, that he had not taken an oath never to marry: “ Were I to bring home a wife, continued he, I should “ disconcert Mrs. Malpas I suppose.”

“ No, no, replied West; not in the “ least; she is not soon disconcerted; “ she has been accustomed to so many “ real changes, and holds herself pre- “ prepared to meet with so many ima- “ ginary ones, that you cannot well “ put her out of her way—But come, “ added he, you must talk with her a “ little yourself, and then you will be “ convinced that what I tell you is “ true.”

By this time they reached the totage, and found the lady ready for their approach. She received them in the most picturesque attitude imaginable. Rising from a sopha, on which she was half-reclined, with a book in her hand, she, with an affected confusion, intreated them to sit.

West told her that Mr. Bonfoy was ready to purchase the house provided he could have it entirely to himself.

In answer to this address she said that she would quit her apartment as soon as she could settle herself conveniently, and that she only desired leave to remain there till she had provided herself.

Revel and West then told Bonfoy that he could not well refuse her request:

quest: he, therefore, consented, though rather with reluctance, to Mrs. Malpas's remaining in her apartment till she could more agreeably provide for herself. This was a business not easily to be accomplished. The widow, in fact, had not the smallest inclination to remove, being in hopes of changing her name a second time, as she had never seen a man whom she did not hope to convert into a lover, at least. She almost believed, indeed, that every man who looked at her, beheld her with the eyes of affection. Having read of many men, struck with women at first sight, she really fancied that both their hearts and heads were full of nothing but the *sweet passion of love*; and that every man caught fire at the sight of a pretty girl, like a piece of tinder, knowing, by fatal experience, that she herself was composed of the most combustible materials, and that the slightest

spark was sufficient to set her in a flame. A woman of this disposition, consequently, could not be very safe in a house, alone, with a young fellow of the same humour; it was, therefore, by no means prudent in her to think of continuing at the cottage. But though she could not stay there prudently, her residence there was very convenient, and as it was so, she resolved not to decamp.

Bonfoy, after having taken a more accurate view of the house and furniture, intending to purchase them together, returned with Revel to the inn, though West urged them very earnestly to dine with him.

While they were walking to the inn, and afterwards, Bonfoy seemed uncommonly thoughtful, and more than once

once expressed a wish that the house which he was on the point of purchasing, had been quite free from an inhabitant, as he did not, at that time, desire to have connections with Mrs. Malpas upon any account.

“ If *her* being in the house is so disagreeable to you, then, said Re-  
“ vel, relinquish all thoughts of it at  
“ once: give up your design, indeed,  
“ of taking any house at all, and re-  
“ turn to town when you have seen  
“ every thing worth observation in this  
“ part of the country; if you do not  
“ rather chuse to extend your first plan,  
“ by making the tour of Wales, as  
“ we are now so near it.”

“ By no means,” replied Bonfoy: “ were I to travel all the world over,  
“ I do not know that I could meet  
“ with a more eligible retreat. I like

“ this house, I like the grounds belonging to it; I am particularly pleased with the situation: I have no objection but to this very unnecessary woman, who is quite in my way.”

“ One would think, said Revel, that you had caught the infection from Singleton, and were become a professed woman-hater.”

“ Indeed you are very much mistaken, answered Bonfoy; and yet I have conceived so high an opinion of the goodness of Singleton’s heart, and of his understanding too, odd as you may think me for saying so, that I cannot tell how to believe him so much in the wrong as you seem to imagine he is. His modes of thinking are extraordinary; yet they are rational, as women certainly occasion a great deal of trouble and vexation

“ ation, even when they give us most  
“ pleasure: and I imagine, that upon  
“ a just computation, those are most  
“ happy, who have leaſt to do with  
“ them.”

“ Thoſe men do not deſerve to be  
“ happy with women, ſaid Revel, who  
“ think ſo of them. Were not the two  
“ ſexes created to contribute to each  
“ others pleaſure? To aſſiſt each other  
“ in their journey through life? Were  
“ not women given us to ſoften our  
“ cares, as well as to enhance our  
“ joys? Where, indeed, can Joy be  
“ found without them? Would not the  
“ universe begin to be depopulated,  
“ and become a barren deſart. Were  
“ all men like Singleton and you!  
“ Singleton has, no doubt, met with  
“ ſome false deluding fair one, and ſhe  
“ has, by deceiving him, given him a

“ disgust and aversion to her whole sex :  
“ but *you* who have not received any  
“ such rebuffs, *you* who might be a  
“ first favourite with the most inviting  
“ women of the age, have no reason to  
“ shun them, to speak slightly of them,  
“ to hold them so cheap—You are very  
“ ungrateful, indeed, Bonfoy.”

“ And to whom, pray, am I un-  
“ grateful? said Bonfoy, hastily—  
“ Where is the woman to whom I am  
“ indebted for any regard? To whom  
“ I am obliged for condescending to  
“ entertain a favourable opinion of  
“ me?”

“ To Miss West, replied Revel,  
“ calmly, fixing his eyes full on his  
“ friend’s face.”

Bonfoy,

Bonfoy, on being so looked at, felt the agitation of his spirits increase to a very great degree. He changed colour, and cast down his eyes; then raised them up with a timidity as if he was apprehensive of having something discovered in his countenance, something which he earnestly wished, and studiously endeavoured to conceal; then he again rivetted them on the floor—saying something softly to Miss West, and after a short pause, hurried to the farthest part of the room.

“ Yes, replied Revel following him, “ to Miss West, who, when she first saw you at Singleton’s, distinguished you from every man present, as you did *her* from every woman.”

“ Did I?—Did I?—answered Bonfoy, stammering—Did I?—Did she?” Then, running up to Revel, and

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and clasping him in his arms — “ My  
“ dear Jack, continued he, tell me,  
“ tell me sincerely, did you really see  
“ any partiality for me in that amiable  
“ girl?”

“ Oh! Oh! replied Revel, laugh-  
“ ing—’Tis come out at last, is it?  
“ But, prythee, my dear Charles, stand  
“ off, or you will, by fancying you  
“ have got Miss West in your arms,  
“ squeeze me to death.”

“ Pshaw! cried Bonfoy; let me en-  
“ joy in idea, what will never be rea-  
“ lized, and do not awake me from a  
“ dream of imaginary delight. Rather  
“ tell me, in order to keep up the  
“ charming delusion, tell me, I con-  
“ jure you, if ever you actually ob-  
“ serve any thing in the looks of the  
“ dear girl, which had the smallest ap-  
“ pearance of an inclination for me?—  
“ I know

“ I know it can come to nothing, yet  
“ I should be enraptured at the bare  
“ idea of being distinguished by *her*.”

“ Well, well, answered Revel; stand  
“ off, I say; these ecstatic fellows are  
“ so troublesome—I dare not tell you  
“ what I think, lest you should be  
“ quite distracted with my informa-  
“ tion; for you are half mad already.”

“ I am, indeed, to think of a woman  
“ of her fortune and expectations: yet  
“ the assurance of being esteemed by  
“ her, would give my touched heart  
“ transports inexpressible.”

“ And why should you fancy her  
“ so much above you, said Revel: A  
“ man of sense and breeding, with a  
“ competency, is even preferable to a  
“ man of the highest birth, and most  
“ affluent

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“ affluent fortune, who is destitute of  
“ understanding, or deficient in beha-  
“ viour for want of a liberal educa-  
“ tion.”

“ It may be so, replied he: and yet  
“ I am sure Mr. West will never give  
“ his daughter to *me*.”

“ I know then what I would do were  
“ I in your place—I would take her  
“ without any ceremony at all.”

“ You would? And do not you  
“ look upon the stealing of a child  
“ from her parents as a criminal action?  
“ A man may be well able to bear the  
“ loss of his gold: such a loss is not  
“ irreparable: he may fill his empty  
“ purse again: but he who is robbed  
“ of a virtuous, amiable daughter, what  
“ can make *him* amends for the cruel  
“ theft?—

“ theft?—Besides, supposing his daughter personally returned to him, can he think her as estimable as she was before her mind was corrupted; before her affections were alienated from him? When she had been taught to consider her disobedience, her breach of filial duty, as a venial fault, and told that by giving a loose to her own inclination, she obeyed the first law of unerring nature? Could *you* be fond of a woman, who would, departing from the delicacy of her sex as a woman, as well as from her duty as a daughter, fly from the arms of an indulgent parent, into yours; knowing at the same time, she should plant daggers in the breast of that parent by her disobedience and desertion? You could not, I think take any satisfaction in the possession of a woman upon

“ upon such terms.—Cool reflection  
“ would surely embitter all the joys  
“ you had promised yourself in the  
“ giddy moments of amorous expecta-  
“ tion—Reflections would embitter  
“ your joys, and repentance severely  
“ punish you for every unfair proceed-  
“ ing for the accomplishment of your  
“ desires.”

“ What a preaching is here? an-  
“ swered Revel, merely about asking  
“ a girl to do what you see she has a  
“ mind to? But I believe you are right,  
“ Bonfoy; I am certain, indeed, that  
“ you are right: and yet, when I see  
“ an avaritious old father doing every  
“ thing in his power to prevent his  
“ daughter from being happy with a  
“ deserving young fellow—like your-  
“ self, Charles, added he — clapping  
“ him on the shoulder; I confess, I  
“ think

“ think there is scarce any punishment  
“ sufficiently severe for him.”

“ You are partial to me, my friend,  
“ said Bonfoy; but if you are sure  
“ that Miss *West* is also partial to me,  
“ I shall be satisfied for the present.  
“ I must leave the completion of all  
“ my wishes, with regard to *her*, to  
“ TIME. However, since you have  
“ found me out, my dear Jack, I may  
“ tell you that my passion for the amia-  
“ ble Miss *West*, and the hopes of  
“ gratifying it in some degree by being  
“ so near her, can alone make me con-  
“ sent to purchase this little cottage  
“ with so unreasonable a proviso tacked  
“ to the sale of it. I cannot by any  
“ means relish the widow’s having an  
“ apartment in it. Were not this lit-  
“ tle spot so near the house which con-  
“ tains the woman whom I almost  
“ adore,

“ adore, I would not bestow a thought  
“ upon it.”

Here the entrance of the landlord to ask them what they would be pleased to bespeak for dinner, interrupted their *tête à tête*, which began to grow very interesting. Bonfoy requested Revel not to breathe the slightest whisper of what he had told him relating to his passion for Miss West. Revel called him the most unaccountable of lovers, — “ I suppose, continued he, that you “ will keep your passion a secret even “ from the fair object herself.”

After dinner, Mr. West called upon them, and the next morning was fixed for the meeting a lawyer at the *grove*, for the adjustment of every thing about the purchase of the cottage. As soon as that business was done, and Bonfoy had

had taken possession of the premises, he purposed to return to Singleton-hall. To that hospitable mansion he adjourned in the evening, and found the brother and sister in a high debate.

Mrs. Grace was *insisting* upon going to pay a visit to some new neighbours just come to settle in the country near them, and affirming with great vehemence, that they expected the proper compliment upon such occasions.

Singleton replied — “ They may expect a visit from us, perhaps, but they may not, therefore, desire visits. Were the expectations of most people answered, they would in the end find themselves, disappointed. It is a greater compliment to some people to let them alone, than to give ourselves any trouble about them.”

This

This last assertion was beyond Mrs. Grace's comprehension; she, therefore, continued to declare that she *would* go; she also *insisted* upon her brother's going with her. By so doing, she provoked him so much, that he, at last, absolutely refused to accompany her.

“ Well then, replied she, since there  
“ is no persuading you to be civil, only  
“ promise me that you will fee our new  
“ neighbours when they come here;  
“ and I will go by myself.”

Revel, who was ever looking out in search of something amusing, immediately asked who these neighbours were.

“ Why, a parcel of d——d imper-  
“ tinent women, cried Singleton; stimu-  
“ lated by Mrs. Grace's teasing beha-  
“ viour

“ viour to express himself with an unusual vehemence; a vehemence for which he generally condemned himself in his cooler moments — No sooner, therefore, were the above words out of his mouth, than he wished to recall them. Turning to his sister, he added — “ Why will you provoke me, “ Grace, beyond all bearing? You “ know very well that there are some “ things which I never can digest: and “ yet know too that the mixing with a “ set of tattling women is my particular aversion. If you *will* visit “ your new neighbours, you must go “ to them by yourself.”

Then addressing himself to Revel and Bonfoy, he gave them the most cordial welcome, and assured them that they had conferred a great favour on him by coming back to the *hall*: adding, that he hoped they would now spend

spend the remainder of the summer with him.

Bonfoy then informed him of the purchase he had made, and begged he would honour him with his company at the cottage, where he hoped to be settled in a little time.

"That is, said Revel, laughing, when  
"he has eased himself of a certain  
"incumbrance; for I imagine you  
"will hardly enter his doors while  
"she is there."

"He has not got a woman there,  
"surely!" said Singleton, with more  
eagerness than he generally spoke.

"No, replied Revel, but she has got  
"him; she has actually taken him in  
"finely, for she positively refuses to  
"quit the premises; he must, conse-  
"quently

“quently, either live with *her*, or not  
“live at the cottage at all.”

“Who would have taken a house  
“upon such terms?” said Singleton:  
“A man had better, a thousand times,  
“be dead, then exist upon such con-  
“ditions. If men did but consider  
“how many heavy evils—evils never  
“to be remedied—women bring upon  
“the world, they would, certainly,  
“avoid them, as they would the most  
“noxious, the most venomous animals  
“in the creation.”

“And yet, notwithstanding this se-  
“vere speech against women, said Re-  
“vel, we cannot live without them.  
“Are we not indebted to women for  
“our existance? Why then all those  
“invectives against the fair sex?”

“Because

“ Because they often occasion the  
“ most exquisite misery in the world?  
“ Because they always give more pain  
“ than pleasure: can any thinking,  
“ rational creature wish to be connected  
“ with beings who are continually di-  
“ sturbing the peace of society? Who  
“ are never—

There is no saying how long Mr. Singleton would have proceeded in his strictures against the female sex, had not Mrs. Grace, finding herself unable to sit another moment a *patient* hearer, and rouzed by his *scurrility*—as she, without mincing the matter, called it—told him, “ that she was sure he was a “ scandal to his sex—So far from de-  
“ siring you to see the ladies, continued  
“ she, I would have you kept out of  
“ their way, for fear you should affront  
“ them. You are the rudest man living,  
“ I believe, to women; and I am cer-  
“ tain,

“ tain, that those who are once acquainted with you, will never desire to see you again: they will be obliged to you for keeping out of their sight.”

“ Nay, now dear madam, said Revel, you are too hard upon my friend. He is always polite to ladies who have any claim to his civility, and only discovers his indifference to women who have been undeferring of his attention. — Leave it to *me*, madam, continued he, in a low voice — Go and see your neighbours, and I will undertake to prevail on Mr. Singleton to receive them when they return your visit.”

“ You are a good creature, Mr. Revel, said she, with an obliging smile, then, turning to Bonfoy, she

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“ asked

“ asked him, with some degree of  
“ anxiety what woman he had got in  
“ his house.”

In answer to this request, he related  
all that had passed between Mr. West,  
Mrs. Malpas, and himself.

Singleton, who sat by, with difficulty  
curbed his impatience till the little nar-  
ration was closed: he then exclaimed  
again, “ Who would have taken a house  
“ with such a confounded clog annexed  
“ to it? You certainly had lost your  
“ sences when you entered into so ab-  
“ surd an agreement.”

“ What? to have a young woman,  
“ and a pretty woman in the house with  
“ one? said Revel. No, surely—No-  
“ thing can be more convenient than a  
“ girl always ready upon the spot: Were  
“ I in

“ I in Bonfoy’s place, I should be quite  
“ pleased to have every thing so handy  
“ about me.”

“ You may have women enough about  
“ you, said Singleton, if you give them  
“ such encouragement: they are suffi-  
“ ciently troublesome to those who ne-  
“ ver trouble themselves concerning  
“ them at all.”

Mrs. Grace now weary of her brother’s satirical speeches, and relying upon Revel’s promise, told him she would go and make the necessary preparations for her visit; adding, that she was sure Mrs. Seley and her nieces, Lady Harriot, and Lady Bell to be, must have thought her the most unsociable of all human beings.

No sooner had she left the room than Singleton exclaimed, "What a furious rage forgadding and gossiping has seized every female since the creation of the world? The very first woman could in no shape be confined: she *would* ramble from her husband, and rather than not talk at all, she would gossip with the devil himself."

The concluding words of this last speech were delivered with an unusual jocularity. Singleton was really pleased to see Bonfoy and Revel return to him, and felt his spirits lighter than they had been for some days, rejoicing at Mrs. Grace's absence, even though she was gone to make an acquaintance with people whom he most in the world disliked. Few persons, indeed, could be

be more unsuitable to him or to his sister than the above-mentioned ladies; the honourable Mrs. Seley being herself the only daughter of a viscount, had married an earl's brother: that earl, having two daughters left him by his wife, had entrusted them and their education to their uncle's widow, the only remaining female of an age and rank to entitle her to the care of two such fine young women of quality. They had certainly fine persons, but with regard to their understanding and manners, they were so exactly like the common run of our present young women, that they might have been pronounced more *externally* than *internally* agreeable.

However, different as these ladies were, in every respect, from Mrs. Grace Singleton, they received her visit with

great satisfaction, merely because she appeared to them to be a *new character*. They were, in truth, exceedingly weary of their situation, as it afforded but little variety, and their time began to hang heavy on their hands, though they played, sung, danced, drew, worked upon the tambour, cut paper, collected butterflies, made landscapes in human hair, and were capable of reading all the novels which had ever been wrote in French or Italian. Such a *melange* of various accomplishments were sufficient, it might have been imagined, not only to recommend the persons adorned with them to every man and woman of taste, but to prevent them from being tired of themselves. Those ladies, however, did not find their accomplishments sufficient to accelerate the flight of time agreeable to their wishes. Accustomed from their earliest

earliest infancy to have every new toy for which they whimpered, they at length began to cry because there were few things left for them to cry about—love only excepted. Not one of those desirable animals had made his proposal either to Lady Bell or Lady Harriot: they were continually, therefore, upon the look out for *the* plaything which they were just arrived at a proper age to enjoy: but as the earl their father, was by no means equal to his wants, he had very little to bestow upon his daughters, and still less to spare towards procuring them advantageous proposals for life: they were kept down as much as possible in the country, since the death of their mother, as Mrs. Seley's jointure would not permit her to make an appearance suitable to her birth in London. However, though Mrs. Seley could not afford to live in the metropolis itself, she had advanced

above a days journey nearer to it, by having hired a house within half an hours drive from Singleton-hall.

The sight of Mrs. Grace Singleton was exceedingly welcome to all the ladies, and they pleased themselves not a little with the thoughts of taking her to pieces after her departure, and of turning every thing belonging to her into ridicule, though she was in no respect a laughable object. Mrs. Singleton was, indeed, a fine woman of her age, and though dressed in the extremity of the fashion, she made a very decent, and not an ungrateful appearance. Yet as these giddy young people wanted food for laughter, the first person who came in their way, and who happened to differ, in the smallest shape, from their standard of dress and behaviour,

behaviour, was, in their opinion, a proper subject for their mirth.

Mrs. Grace, at no times really ridiculous but when she believed herself attractive in the eyes of men half as old as herself, gave a tolerable account of her new acquaintance at her return, and said, that she thought they would be very agreeable neighbours, if her brother could be persuaded to be sociable.

Revel assured her he would endeavour to prevail on him to behave according to her desires.

In three days afterwards, when Mrs. Seley and her neices returned the visit, Revel, who had, in that interval, found an opportunity to ingratiate himself exceedingly with Mr. Singleton, drew

I 5 him

him, half by persuasion, and half by compulsion, into the visiting room. As soon as he made his appearance among the ladies, his awkward astonishment and timidity struck them in a moment: they were at once diverted with their new object before them, and beheld the bashful batchelor with disdain. Their contempt, indeed, they prudently kept to themselves, as the discovery of it might have defeated their designs; but they determined to give a loose to their merriment; especially as they imagined, that by making Singleton appear in a ridiculous light, they should pay the greater court to Revel and Bonfoy, whom they hoped to captivate: thinking that they would not only serve to dangle after them, but that, if properly managed, they might prove characters of some consequence to them. To work, therefore, they went immediately, and by winks and nods,

nods, intermixed with laughs at Singleton's odd looks, and striking embarrassments, attempted to raise the mirth of the company at *his* expence.

Bonfoy, ever feeling for the unhappy, from whatever cause their misfortunes resulted, proposed a walk in the garden to Mrs. Grace, imagining that such a movement would give his friend an opportunity of escaping from the persecution he endured: Singleton, not having penetration enough to see that Lady Bell and Lady Harriot laughed at him *immensely*, only beheld them as a couple of silly gay girls, by no means worthy the notice of a man of sense; but as he had no desire, considering them only in that light, to be near them, he walked away.

At that instant Revel, most unluckily, held him fast by the arm.

Mrs. Seley availing herself of *that bint*, caught hold of his other arm, and began to run on upon all the modern topics of conversation with a fluency, which, while it delighted Revel, by fully answering his design, deafened the poor justice, who made a multitude of efforts to disengage himself from the lady, but she stuck so close to him that he could not with all his struggling, shake her off. As a fish with the hook in its jaw flounces in order to get rid of it, but by flouncing only fixes it the more securely; so poor Singleton found himself more in the power of his persecutors, the more he strove to recover his liberty—He now began to be quite uneasy.

Mrs. Seley,

Mrs. Seley, being concerned in the frolick scheimed by her girls, grasped him with redoubled force, and thanked him for the assistance he afforded her, declaring, that without his friendly arm she could not have walked a step, or have set one foot before the other.

Revel, after having given his new friend a jog, by way of prompting him to answer for himself, and finding him silent, thus apologized for his facettnity. — “ Mr. Singleton, madam, “ is superlatively happy in being capa-“ ble of assisting you in any shape what-“ ever.”

This compliment was answered by Singleton with a frown, and he made fresh effort to get loose. The two young ladies perceiving his intentions, began to titter, while they followed him with Mrs. Grace.

Lady

Lady Bell, slyly twitching his handkerchief out of his pocket, cried, "Sir, "Sir, you have dropped something."

Singleton thought of nothing but how to escape from his confinement, began to thank her in his heart, and hastily—rather angrily, desiring Revel to let him go, endeavoured to stoop for it.

Lady Harriot nimbly stepping forward to prevent his leaving them—and that was certainly his design—slipped down, as if by accident, just at his feet. He then forcibly breaking from Revel and Mrs. Seley, fell upon her, and kicked up his heels in the air, to the great diversion of all the company.

Lady Bell, very unwilling to let the joke be lost, seized both his hands, while

while he was rising, and told him, that since these were his tricks, he should not leave them till he had made her sister ample amends.

Revel then, to carry on the jest, said, with a well-affected solemnity of countenance, "to be sure, Mr. Singleton cannot refuse the lady a kiss." "Who I?—I kiss her?" exclaimed he hastily, with surprize—I'll kiss no woman, I swear. Let me go—Let me go—I wonder women can be so indecent; though, indeed, we ought not to be surprized at any thing they do; they are become so entirely abandoned." "Indecent!" cried Lady Bell: "indecent! I am sure it is more indecent to take such liberties as tumbling."

“bling over ladies, and then refusing  
“to make any sort of reparations: A  
“modest kiss is far more decent than  
“such behaviour,” added she, with a  
leer at Revel, who, taking the hint,  
replied, “Your ladyship is perfectly  
“right, and instantly saluted her in a  
“manner between the *respectful* and  
“the *amorous*. He then called on  
Bonfoy, who hung back a little at first  
having no great mind to follow his  
example; but thinking that he was  
expected to do so, he advanced and  
did as his friend had done. Revel,  
at the same time, wheeled round to  
Lady Harriot, who ran laughing from  
him, on purpose to be caught. Having  
soon seized her, he brought her, by  
both hands, to Singleton, who had stood  
all the while in a kind of embarrass-  
ment, as if he knew not whether he  
should go or stay.—However, upon  
Revel’s advancing towards him, he  
cried

cried, in a kind of hurry, "I'll touch  
"none of them," and ran off. Revel  
followed him, and insisted upon bring-  
ing him back to ask pardon for his  
behaviour. He positively refused com-  
pliance, declaring that he never would  
have any thing to do with such a set  
of impudent forward devils. Hush,  
answered Revel, clapping his hand upon  
his mouth, that's too rough language.  
The poor girls only love a little play,  
and have a mind to a romping bout.  
Nothing else upon my word, Mr. Re-  
vel, said Lady Harriot laughing, but  
we are obliged to you for setting your  
friend right. "What a strange formal  
"creature it is," continued she in a  
low voice; "his unaccountable reserve  
"makes us long to plague him a little  
—Do help me."

"With

“ With all my heart, madam: but  
“ you must have *some* mercy upon him,  
“ or he will get quite away from us,  
“ and then we shall lose all hopes of  
“ any farther diversion.”

“ Lord! What an odd wretch it is;  
“ added Lady Bell: ‘tis a strange thing  
“ he cannot be brought to behave like  
“ other people.”

This hint was enough for Revel: running to Singleton, who was making off as fast as he could, and pulling him back again, he told him that his uncommon shyness and reserve had made him appear altogether ridiculous, and that nothing could restore him to their good opinion, but his acting like a man of spirit. “ Now after all, con-  
tinued he, what pleasure can you  
“ receive

“ receive from being so strangely whimsical; and what harm would it do you to kiss the girls a little? Poor things! it might do *them* a great deal of good; and it could not hurt you in any shape.”

“ I tell you, replied Singleton, in a hurry of spirits, struggling to get away from him, I hate kissing, and will not be forced by any woman.”

“ Nay, but my dear friend, said Revel; there is no fear of that; the woman is infinitely in the most dangerous of the two.”

“ How?” cried he, starting back, “ is not a man in danger from too close connection with that insinuating sex.”

“ Why

“ Why aye, replied Revel; if your  
“ connections are very close indeed,  
“ something may come of them, per-  
“ haps, which you might as well be  
“ without. Bad habits, and some-  
“ times bastards are peeping out, in  
“ consequence of such connections.”

“ Oh! horror! horror! exclaimed  
“ Singleton, stamping and staring, as  
“ if he saw a thousand infernal spirits—  
“ It is but too true—and yet”—added  
he, softening his voice—“ and yet *you*  
“ who pretend to be my friend, per-  
“ suade me to—

“ I persuade you to close connec-  
“ tions? Not I, upon my honour: I  
“ should never have thought of such  
“ a thing, had you not mentioned it  
“ yourself. I only spoke of kissing;  
“ but if you kiss too close, it is entirely  
“ your

“ your own fault: I wash my hands  
“ of it.”

“ Distraction! cried Singleton: let  
“ me go; let me go, I tell you—I  
“ will not kiss them at all: I hate, I  
“ detest, I abhor kissing. The sight  
“ of every woman is odious to me,  
“ but their touch is absolute poison.”

The agonies which Singleton discovered during this short conversation may better be imagined than described: he bit his lips, rolled his eyes, stamped with his feet, and appeared like a madman. His behaviour, indeed, was so frantic, that the females of the company were frightened or affected to be so, and appeared quite willing to let him off. Lady Bell compared him to an over-drove ox, and declared her apprehensions of being tossed. To dispel those apprehensions, Revel said,  
that

that as Mr. Singleton was not a married man, he could not be properly thought to have any horns. "But, " if you have any suspicions of that kind, added he, you had better keep "out of his way. I will not, therefore, detain him any longer."

Singleton, who had long wanted to be gone, and who began to be ashamed of his struggles before the ladies, hurried out of the room. His retreat was accompanied with the loudest peals of laughter from every body but Bonfoy: he looked as if he thoroughly disapproved their intemperate mirth, and afterwards told Revel, that he thought he played too much upon their hospitable entertainer, who had always treated them in the most friendly manner.

Revel.

Revel, in answer, allowed that apology for Singleton, to be a just one; but alledged, in his own defence, that he thought he could not shew himself more his friend, than by endeavouring to make him sensible of the absurdities of his conduct. Being unacquainted with the springs of it, continued he, I am prevented from reasoning with him about it; I, therefore, have recourse to raillery and ridicule in order to divest him of those oddities and particularities which render him less respectable than he would otherwise be on account of his many "virtues and good qualities."

Bonfoy shook his head, and replied,  
" I should have thought you had acted  
" in a more friendly manner, by en-  
" deavouring to reason with him, be-  
" fore you exposed him to the ridi-  
" cule

“ cule of the company. Few people  
“ who cannot be made sensible of their  
“ failings by dint of argument, will  
“ be laughed out of them.”

Revel seemed inclined to dispute this point with Bonfoy, but Mrs. Grace, who every hour began to discover a greater fondness, good-nature, and benevolence in the latter, sided with him so warmly, that the former thought proper to be silent.

Bonfoy, by so earnestly taking her brother's part, recommended himself so powerfully to Mrs. Grace, that she became still more affectionately attached to him, and only waited for his discovering the same regard for *her*, in order to put him into the possession of her person and fortune: not caring to make too free an offering of herself,  
after

after what her brother had said to her ; for whom, tho' she frequently differed from him, she had a great esteem.

Singleton, shocked by his reflections on what had passed, was apprehensive that he had, in some measure, exposed himself. Whenever he felt himself in such a situation, he was always tormented by his feelings—he was always sorry for the errors he committed, but he found it no small matter to correct them. Often did he make every effort in his power to conquer follies which rendered him ridiculous, both in the eyes of others and his own ; and the mortifying consciousness of those follies made him the less disposed to quarrel with the people who saw them, and excited mirth by the exposure of them. Besides, he was a man of so mild a temper that he was never long angry : he was indeed more frequently out of humour with himself

than with any body else. As this was his disposition, he met Revel with his usual chearfulness and affability, after he had exhibited him in so many ludicrous lights, though he could not help liking Bonfoy best; he had, in fact, liked *bim* best before he was acquainted with that gentleman's intrinsic merit, and treated him with particular regard on the above mentioned occasion. When Revel spoke of the vivacity of Mr. Singleton's neighbours, and said that they were fine girls, Bonfoy replied, that the person of a woman was of little consequence, if her mind and manners were not amiable; adding that a *romp*, tho' a woman of fashion, was an immodest and disgusting character.

Singleton heartily joined in these sentiments, and declared that women, at the very best, produced all our vexations and misfortunes in this world, entirely

tirely from the extreme indelicacy of their behaviour. “ ‘Tis the wisest way, “ continued he, to have nothing to do “ with them, and I am very glad to find “ that you (turning to Bonfoy) have “ sense enough to see the danger of “ meddling with a sex so destructive of “ our peace, and to refrain from having “ any connections with them.”

Revel winked upon Bonfoy, at this compliment, and told him that it would require all his good sense and forbearance to live unmoved, uncensured at least, in the same house with Mrs. Malpas.

“ Do you think her so handsome, “ then,” said he.

“ Not I, replied Revel, but when a “ young fellow and a young wench are “ left by themselves in a house together,

“ I will not venture to answer for their  
“ discretion.—It is opportunity which  
“ makes the thief, you know.”

Here Singleton fetched a deep sigh—  
he almost groaned; then lifting up his  
hands and eyes, he muttered something  
to himself.

Revel, catching at his inarticulate  
effusions, hastily cried out, in hopes of  
making some discoveries, “ Are you  
“ not of my opinion, Mr. Singleton?”

He as hastily answered, “ I am of  
“ opinion that the man who trusts him-  
“ self with a woman, is as much un-  
“ done to all intents and purposes, as  
“ if he was shot through the head.  
“ Nay, what is infinitely worse, he  
“ may drag on a miserable life for  
“ a considerable length of time,  
“ and

“ and wish in vain for an end to his  
“ wretchedness.”

“ A man must be very ill treated  
“ indeed, Sir, said Revel, to suffer so  
“ exceedingly by a sex naturally modest  
“ and gentle. Women, it is generally  
“ said, are the worse for their commerce  
“ with men. When a girl by accident  
“ proves with child, she is commonly  
“ exculpated from any guilt—*We* are  
“ the people loaded by the world with  
“ reproachful epithets—*We* are the se-  
“ ducers—the wicked creatures, even  
“ when very probably we have been  
“ ourselves seduced. Few women can  
“ be in a state of pregnancy without  
“ their consent, as there are few men  
“ inclined to commit rapes. There is  
“ not, indeed, much occasion for com-  
“ pulsive proceedings, the kind fair  
“ ones are sufficiently considerate, they

“ have very just ideas about our necessities, and generously give what we otherwise might be prompted to take by violence.”

“ Admirable !” exclaimed Singleton, advancing to him with a rapturous alacrity, while joy sparkled in his eyes, “ Excellently spoken ! Women are indeed alone to blame, and consequently, as I said before, produce all our evils ; and, therefore, continued he, addressing himself to Bonfoy, if you have not quite lost your senses, you will not expose yourself to the mischiefs naturally to be expected from your permitting a woman to live in the same house with you.”

“ Ay, said Revel, with an affected simplicity, you may as well let her lay in the same bed with you.”

“ Whether

“ Whether you will or not, said Singleton, she may find access to it some way or other.”

“ Well bowled, cried Revel, thinking that he had almost arrived at the knowledge he had been wishing for, “ you are right my friend—the fair sex are cursed impertinent; they will not let us go quietly about our business; and if we are not so ready for them as they for us, they will change sides, and ravish us. I declare I have been in *such* perilous situations in my time, and I dare say your person has been attempted by some bold, forward wench.”

“ Not mine, I assure you, Sir,” cried Singleton, drawing back hastily and resuming all his former reserve, “ No, added he, with a sigh, I have never been conversant with any such wanton

“ —you are quite mistaken, I can assure  
you, Mr. Revel—you are quite mis-  
taken.—But I will not talk any longer  
upon this confounded subject.”

With these words, not delivered without much agitation, he quitted the room, and hurried into the garden. There he walked up and down, at a great rate, for some hours.

Revel and Bonfoy were now more than ever unable to account for the absurdities of their hospitable friend. The latter, tho' attached to Singleton, in spight of his oddities, became desirous of taking possession of his new purchase, and pressed the former to depart, though he still rallied him about his fair lodger.

To his lively companion's raillery Bonfoy made little or no answer, being really

really a good deal embarrassed about the lady who had given rise to it. He had also hoped that Singleton would have accompanied him to his retreat, and staid with him for some time, had not Mrs. Malpas been in the way. However, as he could not get rid of *her*, he once more took leave of Mrs. Grace and her brother, notwithstanding the efforts of them both to detain him. Mrs. Grace still relied on the force of her charms, faded as they were, and flattered herself that time, though it had tarnished her beauty, would melt the heart of her favourite to tenderness.

When they arrived at the cottage Mrs. Malpas flew to meet them with all the freedom of an old acquaintance, welcomed them with undissembled joy, and said to Bonfoy, in a soft languishing tone, "I thought you never intended "to come again—I have been *so* lonely

“ since you was here ! — the hours have  
“ passed away *so* heavily ! ”

“ Have you not been frequently at  
“ Mr. West’s ? ” said he, and has not  
“ the family been often to see you ? ”

“ No, replied she, I am no great goer  
“ abroad, and Lucy West has been  
“ an idle little girl, as I tell her, when-  
“ ever I see her. But now you are come  
“ we shall pass our time delightfully.  
“ I wanted a friend to enliven my soli-  
“ tude.”

“ Why it is not good for man to be  
“ alone, said Revel with an arch smile,  
“ nor woman neither; and indeed, I  
“ wonder, madam, that you, appear-  
“ ing to be a woman of the world, can  
“ possibly live so retired a life.”

“ Oh !

“ Oh ! Sir, answered she, with an affected sigh, to me who have had so severe a loss, for Mr. Malpas was a most desirable companion, the world and all its joys are nothing.”

“ Umph ! said Revel, to-besure ; but you must not give yourself up to despair, you are young, and your loss is not irreparable. There are other men (looking at Bonfoy) who frowned, but did not, with any other mark of disapprobation, check the mirth of his friend) there are other men, madam, who may supply the place of Mr. Malpas. You did not, I imagine, before you knew him believe that you should find him so every way agreeable to your wishes.”

“ Oh ! yes, replied she, I was struck the moment I set my eyes on him ;

“ I had

“ I had, indeed, a pre-sentiment before I ever saw him that he would be the master of *my* heart, and that I should make the same impression upon *his*.”

“ That is not to be disputed, madam, said Revel, with a wink at Bonfoy, where you place your affection it must certainly be returned.”

“ Do you really think so, replied she, with a languishing air, a deep sigh, and a leer of invitation, Lord ! well —I believe you are a very good judge of those things, Mr. Revel ; I am vastly happy at your coming hither—I think we three shall enter into a very strict friendship. You *read*, no doubt, or you could not think so justly as you do ; for my part, I am a prodigious reader—life would be an abso-  
lutely dead thing without it.”

“ lute burthen without books—there  
“ would be no existing without them.

“ Certainly not, said Revel, but  
“ what books do you prefer ?

“ Oh ! those ingenious productions of  
“ the imagination, which have been of  
“ late years so frequently published.—  
“ In such works of fancy, founded on  
“ facts, all ranks of people may read  
“ what has been, or may be their fate.”

“ I cannot entirely subscribe to your  
“ assertion, madam, said Revel, there  
“ are many romantic and unnatural in-  
“ cidents crowded into books of this  
“ kind, some of them the productions  
“ of female pens too, that I believe no  
“ human creature ever met with ; and  
“ indeed it is sincerely to be wished that  
“ they never may be met with.”

“ Well

“ Well now, there we differ, replied  
“ she, with a lively air ; for I must own  
“ that I have been myself in some of  
“ the situations mentioned by the writers  
“ of narratives of this kind ; I am,  
“ therefore, assured that they are very  
“ natural. To say truth, I have found  
“ in such narratives the best conduct of  
“ human life.”

“ I should be very sorry, said Revel,  
“ to have a wife, sister, or daughter,  
“ of mine follow the examples of the  
“ heroines generally exhibited in ro-  
“ mances.”

“ How, sir ?—answered Mrs. Malpas,  
“ eagerly, can you possibly condemn,  
“ the conduct of a Clarissa Harlowe,  
“ an Harriot Biron, or a Sophy  
“ Western ?”

“ Now ”

“ Most

“ Most surely, madam.—The *first*  
“ of your admired females was greatly  
“ culpable in running away with a man  
“ of a known bad character, and posi-  
“ tively refusing to marry him after-  
“ wards. The *second* had a strong  
“ mixture of the flirt and the prude in  
“ her, which rendered her conduct not  
“ perfectly consistant with the purity of  
“ heart and simplicity of manners that  
“ can alone make a woman really amia-  
“ ble. As for Miss Western, who is  
“ not indeed in general considered as an  
“ exemplary character, she was highly  
“ censurable for her elopement from her  
“ father’s house ; she went, it is true,  
“ to the house of a near relation, but  
“ a person with whom it was by no  
“ means safe to trust herself, and from  
“ whom she had a very narrow escape.”

“ Why

“ Why surely, said Mrs. Malpas,  
“ interrupting him, you cannot think  
“ as you talk: you cannot condemn  
“ characters which were drawn pur-  
“ posely for our imitation? Charac-  
“ ters, which, had they appeared to  
“ have no failings, would have been  
“ in the highest degree unnatural.”

“ Very true; but are there not wo-  
“ men with failings of a less alarming,  
“ less censurable nature, than those  
“ already mentioned? It is from the  
“ perusal of stories which fill their  
“ heads with improper ideas, that so  
“ many women make undutiful daugh-  
“ ters, and inconstant wives.”

“ Bless me, Mr. Revel! exclaimed,  
“ the lady with uplifted hands and  
“ eyes—Is it possible that these can be  
“ your

“ your real sentiments? Do you actually imagine that any woman can be the worse for reading of novels?”

“ I *must* suppose, madam, replied he, “ that no woman can be the *better* for “ reading them.”—

“ Well now! that is to me astonishing—I never should have conceived “ that you could have entertained such “ sentiments: but before I go about “ to defend my favourite authors, let “ me hear Mr. Bonfoy’s thoughts on “ this subject; if *he* sides with you, “ my task will be the harder to confute “ you both. However, I am determined to try, let what will be the “ consequence. Are you so violently “ set against novels, sir, continued she, “ addressing herself to Bonfoy, as your “ friend here?”

“ A great

“ A great deal may be said on both sides, answered he. Novels, in my opinion have a good or evil tendency, according to the dispositions of those who read them: and may if written in a chaste stile, be of great service; especially if there is a *poetical justice* preserved in them. If the authors of them make proper distinctions between wisdom and folly, virtue and vice, and throw their characters judiciously marked into natural situations, their fictitious compositions may, I will venture to affirm, be read by both sexes, not only with safety, but with advantage. By reading moral tales well-written, in which good and bad characters are properly contrasted and supported, the former may be invited to distinguish themselves by laudable, and the latter may be deterred from the commission

“ sion

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“ sion of criminal actions. Those  
“ productions, however, calculated  
“ chiefly for the discouragement of  
“ vices, the deterring scenes may be  
“ drawn in such colours as to destroy  
“ the end proposed by them, by in-  
“ flaming the imagination, rather than  
“ mending the heart. No person,  
“ therefore, of a romantic, enthusiastic  
“ turn, as well as of an amorous com-  
“ plement, should read books of this  
“ kind, if they are in the slightest de-  
“ gree inflammatory—for in such books  
“ all the moral correctives in some  
“ part of them are often insufficient  
“ to counter-balance the ill effects aris-  
“ ing from the loose descriptions in  
“ the other.”

“ Well!—I am glad to hear you will  
“ allow that people in love may be  
“ enthusiastic, said Mrs. Malpas: I am  
“ sure

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“sure those who are void of enthusiasm cannot truly love.”

“And those who are too enthusiastic, replied Revel, are beyond expression ridiculous.”

“If we are but happy, said Mrs. Malpas, it is no matter how ridiculous we are.”

“I am not ambitious of being happy upon those terms, said Bonfoy. “No man ought to wish to be so—“By giving way to our particular foibles, and giving a free indulgence to all our humours, we not only make ourselves appear in a very contemptible light, but set a very bad example to others, whom we should rather endeavour to improve than to corrupt.”

“ corrupt. To return to novels. Too  
“ many of them are unfit for the pe-  
“ rusal of the fair sex, even when they  
“ are very decently written, especially  
“ those which tend to encourage a  
“ woman to imagine that every man  
“ who looks at her is in love with  
“ her; or to sacrifice discretion, filial  
“ duty and affection, nay virtue itself,  
“ to gratify an urgent inclination,  
“ whether it be laudable or indefen-  
“ sible. Novels of this cast are highly  
“ pernicious, and ought never to be  
“ read. On the contrary, when a his-  
“ tory containing a series of natural  
“ and interesting events is offered to  
“ the public; an history, in which vice  
“ and folly are deservedly exposed and  
“ as deservedly punished, let the inci-  
“ dents be real or fictitious, I should  
“ imagine it may not only afford a  
“ great deal of entertainment to all  
“ sorts

“ sorts of people, but a great deal  
“ of instruction at the same time.  
“ Every book by which the mind is  
“ innocently amused, and agreeably  
“ improved, is fit to be put into any  
“ hands; but I am so far of Revel’s  
“ opinion, as to own that the majority  
“ of love stories are very improper  
“ for readers of a romantic, an amo-  
“ rous, or even of an indolent dispo-  
“ sition.”

“ Perhaps, you rank *me*, said Mrs.  
“ Malpas, among the number of such  
“ readers.”  
“ I make no personal application,  
“ replied Bonfoy with a smile; but if  
“ you are conscious of deserving a  
“ place among them, I would advise  
“ you as a friend to forbear looking  
“ into books which can do you no  
“ good,

"good, but *may* do you a great deal  
"of harm."

"I thank you, Sir," answered she  
"with a sigh and a look, which pro-  
nounced her guilty." Bonfoy then  
not chusing to continue a conversation  
which might become too particular,  
gave an immediate turn to it. Soon  
afterwards leaving the widow and his  
friend together, he went to give some  
directions about the ceremony of his  
new household.

Revel, who had discovered the lady's foible at their first interview, and found that she exactly answered the description Mr. West had given of her, imagined she might contribute not a little to his amusement during his stay at the cottage, was already diverted with his friends warning her  
of

of the risk she ran by giving way to *sentiment* and *sensibility*, two words which have been so hacked for these ten last years in novels, that the meaning of them has been almost annihilated: they are in a manner rendered useless, indeed, to every body but the *reading miss*, who repeats them, like a parrot, without understanding them; most frequently for want of something else to say. This, however, was not Mrs. Malpas's case; if she was unacquainted with the meaning of *words*, she was perfectly versed with the meaning of *things*. She had, from a very early age, when other girls were amusing themselves with their babies, spent all the hours unemployed for the improvement of her education, in reading most of the *sentimental* novels she could procure: and those novels had such an effect upon her imagination, naturally *warm* to

warm and fertile, upon a disposition tender and amorous, that she began to look out for lovers before she left her hanging sleeves: accordingly, she made advances to Mr. Malpas: for some time he disregarded them, as they came from a mere child, he thought there must be a mistake in them: but she soon convinced him that she thought herself woman enough to expect to be addressed with the most passionate tenderness. Diverted, at first, with a character out of the common road, and pleased with her person, for she was tall of her age, and rather what was pretty than otherwise; he fell in with her designs, and trifled with her so long that she fancied herself violently in love with *him*: she also fancied that he was desperately enamoured with *her*. He would have convinced her effectually of her error by leaving her,

and breaking off all acquaintance with her; the young lady, however, particularly bent upon keeping an admirer she had taken so much pains to win, reproached him for being the most faithless of his sex. Exceedingly amused by such a charge from such a girl, he burst into a violent fit of laughing, and as soon as he could compose his muscles, told her that he had never entertained a single thought of her: adding, that he could not tell what she meant—“Your head, child, must certainly be turned, continued he, or you could never have addressed yourself to me in this extraordinary manner.” This speech made her redouble her reproaches: she told him that if he really had no serious intention, he should not have given her reason to think so.

“ In

“ In vain he assured her that he  
“ only meant to divert himself with  
“ her, by talking to her in the way  
“ that all men talk to the younger part  
“ of her sex: a sort of conversation,  
“ indeed, which he had believed her  
“ too young to comprehend.”

She informed him, in answer, that he  
was under a very great mistake—“ I  
“ am not the child, added she, you  
“ take me to be; I hope, and believe,  
“ I know enough of the world to keep  
“ me from being either trifled with, or  
“ imposed upon: and you will find  
“ that I have friends ready to oblige  
“ you to do me justice.”

Such a menace as this was not likely  
to inspire the man to whom it was di-  
rected with a tender passion: yet, so

L 2      unaccountable

unaccountable are the springs which move the human mind, the very words that would have greatly disgusted *some* men, would have driven them for ever from her, only served to ensure Malpas hers for the rest of his life. He confessed that he was pleased with the child's spirit; and when that spirit began to flag, it took a turn still more favourable to her: for the fear of being exposed to the shame of a desertion had such an effect upon her, that it threw her into a dejected state, and her dejection—in the language of romance, a tender melancholy, so fully persuaded Mr. Malpas she was pining herself to death with a *hopeless passion* for *him*, that he married her in a few weeks. By such a proceeding he convinced her she was right in her notions concerning *love at first sight*, and justified her perseverance in the pursuit of a man,

a man, who had, she fancied, felt himself tenderly attached to her, and who, probably, would never have troubled himself about her, had she not taken such a method to attract his attention. From a connexion of this sort, from so ridiculous an union, what happiness could be expected. Mr. and Mrs. Malpas found themselves in a short time extremely deceived: a marriage without real inclination on both sides: is too often attended with disappointment: how natural is the consequence? discretion, indeed, will sometimes supply the place of affection, and a prudent couple may be happy without feeling a grain of fondness for each other. This, however, is a position to which none of your readers of modern romances will give their assent.

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Mr. and Mrs. Malpas were, in a very little time after their marriage, no longer lovers; but they kept up a tolerable appearance of happiness, and that made the world suppose that they still were mutually enamoured. Appearances are frequently deceitful, and those who pronounced this pair to be happy were exceedingly out in their reckoning. Mr. Malpas became very soon weary of a woman for whom he never had the least regard, and she, as soon perceiving the true state of his mind, on her account, made him so uneasy by her complaints and upbraidings, that he determined to put an end to his disquiet as soon as possible: he, accordingly, drank himself into a consumption, and by so doing, speedily gave her an opportunity to look out for another husband.

In

In search of another husband, Mrs. Malpas regulated her conduct exactly upon her first plan: she turned over all the books which had been written upon the subject in which she was chiefly interested; and out of the hundred volumes of adventures which she had read, picked out those incidents which were most agreeable to her own fancy, resolving to throw herself in the way of meeting with similar cases. In consequence of this resolution, she was transported when she heard that the cottage was let to a genteel young fellow without any female belonging to him; and she determined to keep her apartment there, in hopes of gaining a second husband. She also determined to *fall in love* with him, as soon as he came, that she might lose no time; that she might prevent his being attacked by any other woman.

She

She saw, however, in a little while, that though she was so well acquainted with books of adventures, and believed herself mistress of every art of insinuation, Bonfoy was not a man for her purpose: she found herself utterly unable to flatter him into a good opinion either of her charms, or his own attractions: he soon appeared perfectly indifferent to her; but he always kept up a distant civility, which hindered her from finding fault with him, or coming to an *eclaircissement*. After having, therefore, tried every method she had ever read of in the course of her *studies*, she was obliged to retire from the *field*, without having her “ brows crowned with the victorious “ wreaths.”

Mrs. Malpas, not being successful in her operations against Bonfoy, made a regular

a regular attack upon Revel, who had not appeared to her as a man so easily to be conquered by her as his friend. The liveliness of his disposition, and his turn for raillery, induced her to believe that it would not be in her power to make him feel a serious passion for her. However, as he seemed to be much more inclined than Bonfoy to trifle with her, and as she recollects that she began with Malpas, as she remembered too that though she met with many difficulties at first, she conquered him at last, she encouraged him to chat and toy with her, with a view of bringing him to marry her; though she plainly saw that he was not to be treated in the same way as she did Mr. Malpas. She took a different road, therefore, in order to find a passage to his heart. Mr. Malpas had been alternately frightened, and wheed-

led

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led into marriage, but as she had no reason to imagine that Revel would be *so* caught, she turned over her books for a case in print.



END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.